

Once Upon A Lifetime *in Baker County, Florida*



By La Viece Moore-Fraser Smallwood
Volume 5

Publications Available From:



LA VIECE SMALLWOOD
OUT ON A LIMB
COLUMNIST

WINN DIXIE
Highway 121 North
MACCLENNY, FLORIDA



2 East Macclenny Avenue Macclenny, Florida 32063

ELEGANCE 'N' BLOOM

510 South Fifth St. • Macclenny, FL 32063
(904) 249-4444

OPEN 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday
OWNER - Baarbara Stivender

YOUR ONE STOP DECORATING, FLORAL AND GIFT CENTER

Specializing in Victorian Splendor Decor and Exquisite Window Designs
Fresh and Silk Flower Arrangements • Weddings and Special Occasions
Gift Baskets • Antiques • Unique Gifts for All Affairs • Blinds • Interiors

DIRECTIONS: Take first exit at Macclenny on 228. Approximately 1 1/2 miles
on left at corner of South and Fifth Streets.

*"A fine collection of country goods in a
charming historic landmark."*

Tonda Griffis

Cathy Mendolera

Route 2 Box 3250

Corner of CR 125 & Railroad St.

Glen St. Mary, FL 32040

(904) 259-6040



Franklin Mercantile

Open Wed-Sat 10-6

See story of Historic Franklin Mercantile on page 165

COVER PHOTOS - Front Cover (l-r from top): Home of Clemon Cogdell Fraser (1847-1930), wife Betty Fraser (1856-1925), with daughter Mary 1886-1929); James Madison Fraser Family; Gertrude Cowart (Lovey's niece), LouieDean, Esther, Sadie, Corbett, James, Delta Jean, Hazel, Nina, and Beulah Yarbrough; Sammy Walker; Sadie (Burnsed) and Bob Kirkland at home north of Macclenny; Ida May Matthews Padgett, wife of Barney J. Padgett. **Back Cover (l-r from top):** Historical Franklin Mercantile; Harry Richardson; Dennis David Yarbrough (1875-1899), Lillie Raulerson born 1881; Thomas W. and Virginia Sweat at home in Sanderson; Brantly Harrison Fraser and wife Maranda Bowyer Fraser; Blanche Elizabeth Fraser; First known residence of Fraser Family in Baker County.

Once Upon A Lifetime
in Baker County, Florida



**Fifth Street looking north B&P, Gothe Buildings,
corner of Citizens State Bank, Howell Store, unkn,
Old Railroad Depot out of sight to right**

Volume 5

BY

La Viece (Moore-Fraser) Smallwood


DURRA PRINT, INC.
717 S. Woodward Avenue
Tallahassee, Fl.
1995

Copyright 1995
La Viece Moore-Fraser Smallwood
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

This book may not be reproduced
in any form without written permission
from the author/her heirs or
those persons whose signatures
accompany their stories/and or
their heirs.

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number....

Published for the Author by
Durra Print, Inc.
Joe Durrance, President
717 S. Woodward Avenue
Tallahassee, Florida
32304



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2018 with funding from
University of Florida, George A. Smathers Libraries

<https://archive.org/details/onceuponlifetime05smal>

INTRODUCTION

In the early years of teaching journalism at the then-new state university -- the University of North Florida -- in Jacksonville, La Viece Smallwood appeared in one of the writing classes. Pleasant and unassuming, she had a sparkle in her eyes and an eagerness that became contagious for the rest of the class. She was already an accomplished columnist for *The Florida Times-Union* so my task was really to help her polish her work.

In the years since, I have followed her columns, maintained her friendship and enjoyed reading her books about Baker County and its residents.

La Viece's Baker County books reveal two striking assets -- she is a lively, intuitive interviewer and a remarkable story-teller.

Interviewing is a formidable word to most writers. It can be difficult, because many people do not want to talk to reporters or writers. "I've never been quoted correctly yet!" was the response I received early in my career as a newspaperman when I went to interview some authority figure.

A good interviewer is one who can get people to feel at ease and to talk candidly about a given subject. As her stories attest, La Viece has that special knack for getting people to relax and have a conversation with her. What singles her out today is that she isn't starting an interview with a preconceived idea of "digging out the dirt." Instead, she is intent on having her interviewees -- such a formal word! -- tell their stories and she faithfully records them.

La Viece is that special person who is a superb storyteller. She doesn't thrust herself into the stories as so many are wont to do; she gets her interviewees to sit back and reminisce, to bring to life olden days so that pictures of bygone lives will live on in memory as well as printed page.

In universities today, this technique has the “high-falutin” name of “oral history.” This is certainly history but it is even more than that -- these are stories of early lives, of a way of life that is passing by. The stories reflect hardship, the ethic of hard work, and days of simpler joys. Each is a story of families building and growing together. Each is a story of faith.

La Viece’s stories are warm with human emotion and alive with anecdotes of lives lived in barren as well as fruitful times. There are lessons to be learned if young ones will take the time to read. There is humor here; there are tears, as well.

These are stories best enjoyed sitting on a front-porch rocking chair at sunset, or a living room chair as a fireplace sends out warmth in winter.

William J. Roach
Professor Emeritus of Journalism and Communications
University of North Florida, Jacksonville, Florida
February 4, 1995

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----|
| Edward Wray Crockett, Sr. | 1 |
| Leon Sweat..... | 17 |
| Sammy Walker..... | 25 |
| Odis Marion Yarborough..... | 30 |
| Bob Kirkland | 45 |
| Sara Lee Crawford Dugger & Mamie Crawford Combs | 56 |
| Mary Estelle Padgett Ferry | 64 |
| Harry Richardson | 74 |
| Corbett Yarborough..... | 80 |
| Fraser Family | 105 |
| Newspapers in Baker County..... | 144 |
| Baker County's First Football Team | 152 |
| Baker County Historical Society..... | 160 |
| The Historic Franklin Mercantile | 165 |
| Acknowledgements..... | 168 |
| Other Publications..... | IBC |

Dedication to my Family



FIFTH, SIXTH, AND SEVENTH GENERATION BAKER COUNTIANS

1995 Fraser Family Reunion

Top row: left to right: Joel and Teri (Smallwood) Looper, Ashlynn La Viece and La Viece and Vince Smallwood, Eric, Haley, Tami (Smallwood) and Taylor Ellison, Zac and Shirley (Black) Smallwood. Front Row: Troy and Rand Looper, Ryan Ellison, Zackary Vincent Smallwood III, Tabitha Smallwood, Kayla Looper, Bree Anne Ellison and Shannon Smallwood

**THERE ARE TWO LASTING THINGS A PARENT CAN GIVE TO
THEIR CHILD**

ONE IS ROOTS, THE OTHER IS WINGS

TO MY CHILDREN

May your roots be planted deeply in the things we have valued most as a family: Faith in God, Hope in eternity, and charity toward all mankind.

May your wings soar you to incredible heights of success for richer, or poorer, and may you steadfastly be true to yourself, value virtue, honor your heritage, and hold immeasurable respect for those who have made life possible for you through all generations of time.

IN HONOR AND GRATEFUL APPRECIATION
to
My maternal grandparents

Thomas Brantly "Tom" Fraser
16 September 1883–20 September 1974

and

Rosanna LeNora "Rosie" Roberts
17 April 1887–8 April 1960



Tom, Rosie, La Viece

Their love and devotion has been
an invaluable sustaining force
in my life.

I shall forever be grateful for
their confidence in me
that inspired the courage
for me to be, with faith in God,
who and what I am today.

AN OPEN LETTER

For more than 4 decades I have been writing about people, many of whom share deep roots in the soil of my Baker County forefathers.

There is a certain amount of emotion that can't be described when you enter someone's private life. I have relied on my God-given talents and love of people to capture in part a microscopic glimpse into these long and prolific lives. I have tried to secure, in part, for their posterity, those who might never meet them in person, an impression of their versatile personalities. Since I am known to write as I speak, the interviews have been recorded just as our conversation took place. In all cases, the person, and/or members of their family, have been allowed to read the story before publication to assure accuracy and also to bring me the assurance that the narrative has been told in a manner acceptable to them.

Many of the interviewees have passed on, and some of the personal things I recorded are the only expressions about their life chronicled. I owe so much to those of you who have allowed me the privilege of visiting in your homes, who have talked forthrightly about your own life without the least bit of inhibition. Many of you have said to me, "I don't know why anyone would want to know my story, I've never done anything important," and all the while you have been molding lives, being a good neighbor, working hard to make an honest living and making do with what you had, without complaining. You have feared God enough to live honest, upright, just lives and have left a proud legacy for your posterity. And even those of you who have told me about past transgressions have shown great humility. Mistakes are something all of us make, and I have understood how you feel about them, especially when there is a story of your life being written.



In some instances I have recorded them with your approval, and in others they have been left unsaid because they were not the real issue.

My greatest desire is that your life will not be forgotten. Too many of our Baker County forefathers lie in unmarked graves; records and incidents in their lives are lost forever because no history has been preserved. If this desire is reached, then I shall have fulfilled a sincere desire of writing something of significance that perhaps could help change, for the better, the lives of those who read this work.

In the last chapter of Malachi, the final Old Testament prophecy is recorded in verses five and six. It is my firm and honest belief that these stories will share in this prophecy, and I feel humble indeed that I have had the privilege and joy of being a part of my Heavenly Father's work -- for He said:

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord:

And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

I am truly very grateful to each of you for sharing a small glimpse into your life with me, and others, for now we can know just how it was *Once Upon a Lifetime in Baker County, Florida.*

With sincere appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "LaViece". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, sweeping initial "L" and a long, horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr. Edward Wray Crockett, Sr.

His story as told by his son, Edward Wray, Jr., October 1994.



**Doctor Edward Wray Crockett, Sr.
Macclenny, Florida Physician
1930s**

"I don't believe Ella killed my father. There's too much evidence against it, and now that I look back on it, I feel I know how it happened and who did it."

Edward Wray Crockett, Jr.

They say legends never die, that they are just passed down from generation to generation until the myth finally becomes intertwined with enough fact and fiction that it is shrouded in an intriguing mystery. That is the case of Dr. Edward Wray Crockett, Sr. whose untimely death in 1938 is still talked about and passed down from generation to generation with great reverence. This is his story as remembered by his son, Edward Wray "Junior" Crockett, Jr., and friends and acquaintances who knew him best and loved him most.

He was the son of a distinguished physician, Dr. M.J. Crockett, who arrived in Worth County, Georgia, about the time it was formed from Dooley County. He was not a southern native, but born near Logansport, Indiana, on April 24, 1843 to David and Lovisa Crockett, who came from Ohio. Dr. M.J. Crockett was the fourth of their five children and received his



**Left to right:
Dr. E. W. Crockett, Will Barber,
Jamie Milton ca 1937**



**Dr. E.W.
Crockett, Sr.
World War I**

early education in the county schools of his native state, completing his medical education at Miami Medical College in Cincinnati in 1870. He located first in Oregon, but later came south to Worth County and in 1875 married the daughter of J.R. Hills, an old and honored family of the area. He and Sarah Hill were the parents of six children, one of which was Edward Wray Crockett.

Dr. M.J. Crockett held the distinction of being the first physician in Sylvester, Georgia, and for more than 40 years served the county in civic endeavors, as well. He was a county councilman, maintained a position on the Board of Trustees for the Board of Public Education, was a Royal Arch mason, and, with his family, a member of the Methodist Church.

In spite of his celebrated status, Dr. Crockett became estranged from his son, Edward Wray, who later gained his own rightfully-earned recognition in Baker County as an humanitarian of the people. And though the entire story may never be known, the son of Edward Wray,

known as “Junior,” says the conflict occurred when his grandfather refused to provide financial assistance to his son for a career in medicine. Instead he financed a medical career for his son-in-law, I.C. Deariso. Strong-willed and determined, Edward Wray found his own way independently of his father, putting himself through pharmacy school, then on to the Atlanta School of Medicine, now Emory University. In the interim, he worked as an assistant for a Dr. Brown in Lake City, and someone in Macon as he slowly but surely worked his way through college. When he graduated he received a \$500 check from his father in Sylvester congratulating him and expressing the pride he felt for his son's feat. Edward Wray tore the check in half and returned it promptly with a note that said he had made it thus far without his help and he didn't need or want it now.

“When his parents died he didn't even attend their funeral,” said Junior. “I guess he was so hurt that he never went back. He had a sister, Katie, who lived in Miami. She and her husband, W.A. Moore, had a large family and daddy helped them financially a lot. And he sometimes mentioned his other sister Claude, but other than that, the subject of his family was closed.”

Dr. Edward Wray Crockett hung his shingle out in Glen St. Mary in a small frame house embellished with a front porch; it was just north of the railroad tracks. It's not sure when he arrived, but he served as the physician who examined recruits during World War I.

“Daddy was married to Ollie Mae Culpepper when he came to Baker County, but this marriage failed. One day he was in the Franklin Store and Post Office when he saw my mother, Veatrice Granger, whose family came from up around Olustee and over in Union County.” The couple cultivated a romance and were married in 1918.

Edward Wray Crockett, Jr. was born to the couple on April 27, 1920. He proudly bears his father's distinguished name, but has been known all of his life simply as Junior. He freely discusses his famed father and wishes he knew more about the man who was so revered in Baker County.

“My first memory of my father is of him rocking me on the front porch of our home. He had the ever-present cigar in his mouth,” he said. “We lived in the rear of daddy's office. I remember that shelves lined the walls and daddy dispensed his medicine from big

brown jars. I recall he would compound a little of this and a little of that. He charged \$10 for an office or house call and that included the medicine if a patient needed it. Of course he didn't always get paid in money; many times he was given stock, chickens, vegetables, beans or potatoes. It was during the Depression and people were poor. Daddy understood."

Junior Crockett remembers going on house calls with his father, far out into the woods of the rural homes of poor tenant farmers. "Daddy and I had a game. I knew when he was leaving to make a house call and I'd go hide in the rear seat of his Model-T Ford touring car. I'd go 'way down in the back seat, hiding, and he'd make out like he didn't see me, and when he did he'd make out like he was mad, but it would tickle him. My favorite place to go was out where Roxie Prevatt Burnett's family lived. There were lots of children around. It's near Hamp Register's place but it was sorta Prevatt territory and I enjoyed playing with all the children. The roads were almost always bad. It seemed everytime we'd go out that way we'd have to go cut a tree down and get the old car out from being stuck.

"Daddy used to take care of people as far up as Baxter, and it would take him almost all day to get up there if he went in the morning, and sometimes it was in the night before he'd come back. I've never heard of anyone my daddy turned down that needed him and I never heard of him doing anything out of line. If he was drinking, which he occasionally did, he wouldn't treat you.

"He had saved \$300 in silver dollars for my education; I wanted to be a doctor, too, and I remember he had to use them to buy more medicine because the people didn't have money to pay him and he didn't have money to buy medicine to treat them. I remember that later on there was a Mr. Armstrong that ran a store. Some of the people would bring five gallons of moonshine into his store, and he'd sell it for them to pay my daddy for medical services he had given the family."

In 1927 Dr. Crockett moved his practice and family from Glen to Macclenny. At the time, Highway 90 was in the process of being the first road paved in the county. The family moved into a home on north 121, and Dr. Crockett began his practice in an office building on the

southwest corner of Macclenny Avenue and Fifth Street. He later moved across the street and opened his office in the Power's Building just down from Power's Sundry and the Hotel Annie.

Even though there were marital problems in the Crockett home by 1929, the couple had another child, William, born March 22, 1932. Both of their sons were delivered in Jacksonville by Dr. Crockett's colleague, a prominent Jacksonville physician, Dr. R.Y.H. Thomas.

"Daddy never treated his own family. He wouldn't even give us an aspirin," said Junior.

"Daddy started getting away from us," said Junior. "We really only saw him when he'd come in to sleep or be there to eat. I remember he was a very neat man in appearance, changing his detachable collar twice a day. My mama nagged him a lot. She always suspected he was seeing someone else and she was very jealous. It made an unpleasant home for us with all the accusations. If she had not kept on about it, I don't think daddy would have ever left, but mama kept on until they divorced."

Crockett married Ella Dykes soon after. His sons remained with their mother Veatrice in their home in North Macclenny.

"It wasn't much of a family life after that," said his son. "Ella broke up our family."

Meanwhile Dr. Crockett bought some property on Main Street adjoining the Citizen's Bank. He opened a Sundry Store and moved his office to the rear of the store.

In time, marital problems cropped up with his wife Ella. "They separated in early 1938 and I moved in with daddy," said Junior. "We lived in the Morris House together, and I worked in the Sundry Store."

Junior and his friend, Horace Rhoden, had been to Jacksonville on the night of February 24, 1938. He remembers driving through town on his way to drop Horace off at his home, which was located near the old Walter's sawmill, east of the Glen St. Mary River bridge. As he passed by Ella's home on West Main Street he noticed his father standing on the front porch talking with her. It took 10 minutes to take Horace home, and when Junior drove back by, on his way to the Morris House, the couple was still standing there talking. Fifteen minutes later, as Junior lay in bed waiting on his father to come in, some-

one else arrived instead. It was Ella's brother-in-law, Joe Phillips, the town's Chief of Police.

"Came to tell you your daddy's been shot and killed," he said.

Stunned and in shock, Junior quickly dressed and accompanied Joe Phillips back to Ella's house where his father lay mortally wounded. He had been shot in the head. Ella claimed self-defense.

The following day's headline and story in the *Florida Times Union* reported:

Dr. Edward W. Crockett, 43, prominent Macclenny physician, was shot and instantly killed shortly after 1 a.m. today at the Crockett residence, and his widow was placed in Duval county jail here several hours later to await outcome of an inquest at Macclenny tomorrow. She claimed self-defense. The couple had been estranged since about Jan. 1. Dr. Crockett was living at a Macclenny hotel. Mrs. Crockett, with Dr. Crockett's two sons by a former marriage, Edward W. Crockett, Jr. and William J. Crockett, lived at the Crockett residence. Dr. Crockett was shot through the head. The bullet entered his left ear. Mrs. Crockett told officers the doctor forced his way into the house, struck her with a flashlight, and that in self-defense, she fired. Officers found glass had been knocked out of the front door.

"I'm sorry I had to do it," Mrs. Crockett said.

An acquaintance said the doctor had delivered a baby just before he was killed.

An inquest will be conducted tomorrow afternoon before Frank Dowling, county judge and coroner at Macclennny.

Dr. Crockett was a native of Sylvester, Ga. and was a graduate of Emory University at Atlanta. He had lived in Macclenny for 21 years. A World war veteran, he was a member of the American Legion and of Dawkins lodge, Free and Accepted Masons. He owned the Crockett drug store at Macclenny. In addition to his widow and two sons, he is survived by three sisters, Mrs. W.D. Nobles of Pensacola, Mrs. Kathryn Moore of Meridian, Miss, and Mrs. Mattie Deriso of Atlanta, and a brother, Frank Crockett. Here's Mrs. Crockett's story of 'the killing'. "Dr. Crockett came to my house about 1 a.m. today and knocked. I opened the door, saw who it was and shoved it shut. He knocked the glass out of the door, reached through and unlocked the lock, and came on in.

He had a flashlight and he hit me over the head with it. He went on back to my bedroom.....(remainder of article missing).

Commenting on the events reported in the article, Junior Crockett says the facts are not presented.

"I saw the glass on the front porch myself. It was knocked out from the inside. Testimony from the local telephone operator in Macclenny -- which at the time had to put your call through personally -- said that Ella had called daddy to her house on the pretense that she was ill. Ella had seen a light on at the Sundry Store because daddy was treating a man who had been cut in an accident. That is when she called the operator and told her to ring daddy because she was ill, and when daddy finished treating his patient, he went to treat Ella."

Ella Crockett was indicted for first-degree murder and convicted by a Circuit Court jury in Macclenny on a charge of manslaughter. She appealed her case to the Supreme Court and was free on bond pending the decision. On April 7th the Supreme Court upheld her five-year prison sentence. "It's a sad case," observed the court. "There is much in the evidence to appeal to the sympathies of the court and the jury, as well as to members of this court, but the jury settled the disputed questions of fact and this court would not be authorized to disturb their finding, which was approved by the trial court when it denied motion for new trial." The Supreme Court said records showed each had threatened to kill the other. Junior Crockett denied this was true.

"If that had been the truth I would have known. Daddy was not the kind of person to make threats and everyone who knew him, knew that."

Dr. E.W. Crockett's funeral service, held in the First Baptist Church in Macclenny, was the largest ever held in the county.

"The church couldn't hold them all," remembered Junior. "Blacks attended as well as whites. He had patients all over the county and he was well loved and respected," he said.

Junior Crockett was 17 years old when his father was killed. He moved back to the home of his mother. Three years later she died, tragically.

"She had gall stones, but I remember my daddy telling her how dangerous an operation would be as stout as she was and she needed to

lose some weight. She should have listened to his advice because he was one of the best physicians in the country at the time, sought after for articles and advice in distinguished medical journals. I didn't want her to go and didn't support it because of what daddy had said and she needed to lose weight first, but she insisted. I got Auzie Dugger to drive her in to Jacksonville to the hospital. At first she seemed to get through the operation well, but a few days later she developed a blood clot and died.

"In a way, I was close to my mother, but I have always felt like if she hadn't talked so much to daddy about other women that things would have been different. Maybe the things were true, but now it doesn't make any difference, they divorced."

The same year his father died, Junior married pretty and petite Doris Keen, a native of Taylor. She remembers his mother well.

"Veatrice was a warm, caring mother, a smothering mother. It may have been the difference in education that she was narrow minded and very jealous," she said, "but Dr. Crockett was a very brilliant man, and besides his formal education he was an outgoing person. She probably had no reason to be so jealous of him; he could not have served the community like he did and womanized as much as he was accused of doing. When you are a small child and hear this said about a person you love, it disrupts a home; it should have been said privately or just not at all," she said.

Junior felt if his mother had suffered in silence the two would have stayed together.

"I knew, even at my age, it couldn't be all true. Lots of times he'd be out there in those woods with sick people, or delivering babies. When my mother died, I think she died with a broken heart."

Veatrice Crockett died January 21, 1941. She was 40 years old.

Junior turned 18 years old on April 27 in 1938. He married Doris on August 21, of the same year. The two had known each other since they were born.

"Dr. Crockett delivered me on July 30, 1920," she said smiling. "Veatrice told me later that when he came home he remarked that he had just delivered the prettiest little girl baby that was just perfect for their son. Junior was three months and three days old at the time," she noted.

But it was years later before the couple would meet formally. Her parents, Lessie and Altie Keen, had moved away, first to Bryceville, then to White House. She often visited relatives and while home on one of the visits she and Junior met at the Community Center. They dated about a year before marrying.

"I went to the Sundry Store to get \$20 one evening so we could drive over to Folkston and marry," said Junior. "When I asked the Justice that married us how much we owed him, he said, 'How much do you think she is worth?' and I said, 'Well, I got \$20, just take you something out of that' and he said, 'Thank you' and put the \$20 in his pocket. I had to come back to Macclenny and get some more money before we could even go after a hamburger, and that's the truth!" he said. The couple settled down in a small apartment in the rear of the Sundry store.

Struggling to pay mounting bills and hold onto his father's buildings, he had to settle the loan made by Ella. The Citizens Bank had promised him that if he met the interest payment each month they would work with him to keep the property.

"I didn't inherit any money when my daddy died like a lot of people have the impression. I had to borrow the money from the bank to keep the buildings. The bank had loaned Ella money on the buildings even though her name was not on the deeds, and the loan had to be paid off. Her name was only on the deed to the house where she had lived with daddy. Daddy had called Hollis Knight, a lawyer in Starke, the day before he died and asked him to come over the next day because he wanted to get his affairs settled," said Junior.

"After daddy died I called Hollis and he helped me. Ella was wanting to get out of prison bad, so I appeared before her first parole hearing and explained the way things were. I offered to pay off the mortgage on the two buildings and her house, and give her the house free and clear if she would settle that way. I had to borrow the money to do it and that's how I got to keep the buildings," he said. "The bank had assured me I didn't have to worry about it as long as I paid the interest."

When World War II started, Junior received a notice from the bank. They needed their money. He had no way to get it. "I went in to pay the interest one day and they told me they couldn't accept that and said, 'You

could be drafted into the war at anytime and things have changed around here'. I told them I would be glad to continue paying on the interest and a little on the principal, but they said they just couldn't do it.

Soon after, Doris was surprised to see two bank officials come into the Sundry store. "They looked around and from what I could gather from the conversation they were talking about how they were going to remodel the store to accommodate their plans," she said.

"I had a friend in Thomasville, Georgia, who was involved in whiskey," said Junior. "He had come down here and my daddy had treated him well when he came into the sundry store, so one day I told him about my situation and he told me not to worry about it, that he'd loan me the money that very week to pay off the loans."

"He grinned and said, 'Well, it's no use going into it any further, we've got to have it all,' and I said, 'I think I got it all, just figure up how much I owe you, and he did, and I counted out the money and gave it to him. You can't believe how sick that guy looked. I was very fortunate," he said.

"That's really the way I got started in the moonshine business," he said. "I got started because of necessity in a way, because I still had to make some money to pay back the loan I had made with the man in Thomasville to salvage what daddy had. I found out that the poor farmers in Georgia were selling their syrup to the Rodenberry family for 50 cents a gallon, so I paid them 65 cents, sold it locally for \$1 and soon had my loan paid off." *(Editor's note: The story of Junior Crockett's involvement with the moonshine industry can be read in Volume V).*

Junior and Doris's first child was born nine months and three days after their marriage. They named their son Edward Wray Crockett, III when he arrived May 23, 1939.

"He learned to crawl and walk in the Sundry store," she smiled.

Another son, David, arrived October 24, 1951.

Junior Crockett is a man of strong feelings and convictions. He likes to recall stories of his father and relishes sitting and talking with people who personally knew him.

"He was truly a 'see no evil, speak no evil and hear no evil' kind of man," said Junior proudly.

"I remember an incident when daddy was returning home late at night from making a house call. He had a friend, Ealie Johnson, with him. They were driving daddy's old Model-T Ford. They came to Chalker Branch, south of Sanderson, and found that a cross tie had been placed across the road. Daddy stopped his car and someone yelled, from out of the darkness, 'Get out of the car with your hands up and turn your car lights off.' Back then, the old Model-Ts had coils down on the bottom of the dashboard and daddy said he kicked his lights off with his foot and got out with his hands on his head. He heard someone yell, 'Why, that's Dr. Crockett! Go on Dr. Crockett, get the hell out of here,' or something like that. Anyway, daddy got out of there and they got all the way down to Dinkins church, travelling through the pine trees from the branch where they were stopped, and Ealie reminded daddy he had never turned his lights back on. It was pitch black and he had not even thought to turn on the lights, he was so scared. The next day they heard who had been killed there that night -- two men named John Conner and Frank Dolly. They were driving the same kind of car as daddy and he was almost mistaken for them."

"I had always wanted to be a physician like daddy," he said, "and one day he let me watch an autopsy performed on a little girl that had been electrocuted over at the Chessman Theatre. Mr. Chessman had installed chicken wire over his posters advertising the movies because the kids would otherwise tear them off. He ran an electric wire just to shock them. Well, this little black girl came by when it had been raining and was electrocuted. During the autopsy, Daddy just said her heart was already bad, and she could have died even if a car horn had blown loudly and scared her."

Now that he is much older and with more time to reflect, Junior Crockett expresses strong and concentrated feelings about his father and his tragic and untimely death.

"I don't believe Ella killed my father," he says with conviction. "There's too much evidence against it, and now that I look back on it, I feel I know how it happened and who did it. At the time, I was so young, and even though I was called as a witness, they just didn't have qualified investigative law enforcement people like we have today."

Had it happened today, I believe the outcome would have been much different.”

He vividly recalls the night when he saw his father talking to Ella through her door on the front porch of their home. He looked at his watch as he came back by on his way to the Morris House. “Fifteen minutes after I lay down, Joe Phillips came and told me daddy had been shot. That’s 15 minutes after I passed by there. The story goes that daddy went up there and tried to break in, yet I saw him when I took Horace home, talking to her through the door, and 10 minutes later, when I came back by, they were still talking. Fifteen minutes after that he was dead. If you think about it, it would have been impossible for Joe Phillips to have been notified, gotten up out of bed and dressed, then drove over to Ella’s house, and find that a murder had taken place. He wouldn’t be thinking, ‘I got to run get Junior Crockett,’ would he? But he came himself to get me. I didn’t put all of that together at the time, but as I’ve thought about it, and dreamed about it, I think someone else did it, and she took the blame.”

Joe Phillips was Ella’s brother-in-law, and his wife was spending the night with Ella the night the tragedy happened. Speculation at that time, old timers say, was that he shot Dr. Crockett so he could share the property with Ella.

Junior has other reasons for suspecting Joe Phillips, he says. “Not long after daddy was murdered, I was leaving the Sundry store out the back way. I was in a hurry, and had left my car door open while I ran in. There was a big construction trailer parked there, too, and as I came running back out, something came at me like a baseball bat, or black-jack. I was so startled I hit the starter and backed up my car so that the lights shined up underneath that trailer. I could see a man’s feet and I yelled at him, calling him Joe Phillips. I told him I knew it was him and asked him to come out, but he stayed down behind the trailer. I knew he had a gun, so I didn’t get out. Ella and daddy had a heated thing going because of the divorce, and although daddy didn’t have a lot by today’s standards, it was a lot back in those days. I think they wanted me out of the way. If I had been walking that night instead of being in a hurry and running like I was, whatever it was he tried to hit me with would have probably killed me.

"Another time I saw Joe's car parked in the dark down from my house. After I pulled in the drive, I backed up and caught him running to his car. Now, what business did he have hanging around my house, especially at night?" he asked.

Townspeople who remember the tragedy say most of the populace discounted that Ella Crockett killed her husband. They think she took the blame for someone else. Was it Joe Phillips, her brother-in-law? The mystery remains, shrouded by memories.

Dr. Crockett delivered many of Baker Countian citizens when they were born, often sitting up for days and nights until the time for delivery arrived. He is remembered by many, but perhaps one of the persons who knew him best and missed him most was Paul Rhoden, who was employed by Dr. Crockett as the first soda jerk in Crockett's Sundry. After a stint in the Air Force, he returned to Baker County, purchased Crockett's Sundry from Junior and changed the name to Paul's Rexal. He became Baker County's first pharmacist. Commenting on his relationship and memories, he said:

"I got to know Dr. E.W. Crockett very well while I was still in high school and worked as a soda jerk at the Powers Sundry store and when Dr. Crockett had offices in the Hotel Annie. He was one of the best-known and best-liked men in Baker County. He was the perfect example of the country doctor. He would go anywhere, anytime, in any kind of weather. He went whenever he was called. In those days, the roads were unpaved and would become almost impossible to travel on in wet weather. Occasionally, he would ask me if I wanted to ride with him on house calls to remote areas all over the county when he delivered babies and visited the sick. Many times those trips would end up in a muddy bog and he would have to get a nearby farmer to pull him out with a tractor or a pair of mules. I never knew of him refusing to help a patient because they didn't have money to pay or because they already owed him and hadn't paid. To the best of my knowledge, during the years I was associated with Dr. Crockett, I don't believe he kept a record of who owed him or how much they owed, other than in his head. I lost a great boss, and all of Baker County lost a great friend," said Paul.

Today, Junior and Doris Crockett make their home in Valdosta where business ventures took them many years ago. They are a legend to old timers, and even to new people moving into town who eventually ask who built the elegant, picturesque home that sits on the hill bordering the little St. Mary's River between Macclenny and Glen. It's known as the Crockett home, and if the walls could speak it would not be unspeakable things. Junior and Doris Crockett live their lives openly in spite of the many speculations surrounding Junior's involvement with questionable organizations and associates that embellished the couple's lifestyle of splendor and affluence. They talk about it candidly and straightforwardly in Volume VI of Once Upon A Lifetime, where an account of the moonshine industry in the county is explored with anecdotes from the people who lived through it and worked in it.

The Crocketts are fine people who have added a celebrated aura to Baker County that is unexcelled. When asked about a 1953 newspaper headline that blared, 'SHINE KING SUSPECT NABBED,' Junior likes to gaze out beyond all the speculation and say with intensity, "I never made a drop of whiskey, or had any made. I never hired anyone that wasn't already in the business to work for me and I never influenced anyone to participate; in fact, I discouraged it."

From rags to riches he has rubbed shoulders with the elite, and with the poor. His description of Baker Countians: "They are the finest people I've ever been around in my life. I can't compare them with the elite I've known and associated with in businesses and country clubs, because they don't compare. I've only known true and honest people in Baker County, the very best. I love them and I'm proud to still call Baker County home."

And what do Baker Countians think of Junior Crockett?

-- "He's a Robin Hood," said one.

-- "There has never been anyone else like him, and it's not likely there ever will be." said another.

-- "A true friend to people, especially the poor and needy," said someone else.

-- "Honest in his dealings," said still another.

-- "A man of his word," said yet another.

A legend agree all, just like his father!

CROCKETT GENEALOGY

Kay C Stone, a Crockett genealogist who lives in Lakeland, Florida, has generously contributed the following Crockett genealogy.

The earliest proven ancestor, William Crockett, born about 1782 in that part of North Carolina that is now Tennessee. He is thought to be the brother of Davie, born 1786 also in North Carolina as the son of John Crockett and Rebecca Hawkins.

William left for Ohio and was in Butler County before 1812. His son, David, was born Jan 19th. He married widow Nancy McNary Moss. They arrived in Indiana after 1822 when daughter Matilda was born and before 1836 when David married Louisa (Lovisa) Smith on July 21 in Carrol County. Louisa (Lovisa) was the daughter of George Smith and Catherine Martin. Louisa was born Dec 4, 1819 in Kanawha Salt Springs, Va. William left a will in Cass County, Indiana, dated June 10, 1856. The will was proved on March 16, 1858. His son David had predeceased him, but he listed grandchildren -- sons of David Crockett -- Franklin, Martin, and James, \$50 each.

David was listed in the 1850 census as age 37, farmer, born in Ohio. Wife Louisa, age 30, was born Va. Catharine A, age 13, born Indiana; Nancy J., age 11, born Indiana; Franklin, age 8, born Indiana; Martin, age 6, born Indiana, and James, age 2, born Indiana. David died Apr 25, 1853 in Carroll County. Martin John Crockett, born Apr 24, 1845 in Logansport, Indiana, received his medical education at the Eclectic Medical College of Cincinnati. He completed his education in 1870 and first went to the far west. He eventually arrived at Albany, Oregon. Either the opportunities or the climate were not to his liking and he headed back east and finally to the south where he arrived in what was then Dooley County (now Worth County). Martin John Crockett married in November 1875 Miss Sarah (Sallie) Jane Hill, born July 1857 in Oakfield, Worth County, Ga. Sarah was the daughter of Jessup R. Hill and Martha Stanley. Sarah's ancestry traces back to Edward Doty, Mayflower ancestor, and to Revolutionary War Capt. Josiah Warren.

Dr. Crockett and Sallie had the following children:

-- Martha Martin Crockett, born Dec 20, 1876, wife of Idus Carl Deariso, resident of Atlanta, and mother of three daughters;

-- Benjamin Franklin Crockett, born Sept 5, 1877 in Concord, Fl, resident of Memphis, Tn., married, 1st, Mittie Davenport Jernigan and father of three sons. Married 2nd Edna Hendley;

-- Clara Lovisa, born Dec 1884 in Suth Carolina, wife of Richard F. Lockhart of Nashville, Tn., and has one son and one daughter;

-- Katherine Warren Crockett, born July 24, 1886, Columbia, S.C. wife of William Arthur Moore, employee of Western Union, residence Miami, mother of six children;

-- Willie H Crockett, born 1888 in Isabella, Worth Co., and died Sept 17, 1891 aged 2 yrs. 10 mos;

-- Claudia Colee Crockett, twin to Flora C. Crockett, born Oct 8, 1894 in Isabella, Worth Co., (Flora was stillborn). Claudia married Dr. William Daniel Nobles, resident Pensacola, Fl., one son, one daughter; and **Edward Wray Crockett**, born May 27, 1892 in Sylvester, who received his medical degree from Atlanta School of Medicine (now Emory Univ) and practiced medicine in Macclenny, Florida. He was a 32nd degree Mason, a charter member of the Macclenny Lions Club, and a veteran of WW I in the Army Medical corps.

Edward Wray Crockett married, 1st, Ollie Mae Culpepper on July 17, 1910 in Worth County, divorced; married, 2nd, Veatrice Granger, by whom he had two sons, Edward Wray Jr. and William John Crockett; married, 3rd, Ella Dykes.

The immigrant Crocketts were of Scotch-Irish descent. The surname, Crockatt or Crockett, has been documented in Scotland as early as 1296 when Huwe Croket of Kameslank and Wm Croketa of Kylbride rendered homage (from *The Surnames of Scotland, Their Origins, Meaning and History* by George F. Black, PhD, 1946). This seems to disprove the French origin of DeCrocketagne theory, which states that Antoine Desausure Perronette de Crocketagne, born 1643, son of Gabriel Gustave de Crocketagne, was the direct ancestor of John. f/o Wm. f/o David. f/o Martin John.

Leon Sweat, Sanderson, Florida Interview, 1993



Leon & Neva Sweat

"My parents were the only ones who had a radio in Sanderson for years and sometimes, when a big prize fight was going on, there would be up to 50 people in our house, or on the porch, standing outside the windows and all out in the yard."

Leon P. Sweat

Many tranquil memories surround the rural Sanderson home of Leon and Neva Davis Sweat. Inside their cozy home, they are reminded of memories collected over the many years they have shared together. Many are centered around the fond recollections they have of Sanderson's former two-story stucco schoolhouse where Leon attended school and where the educational careers of his parents and siblings took place.

For Leon Sweat, it all began in the small settlement of Beachville in Suwannee County on November 26, 1921, as the last child born to pioneer educators Thomas W. and Virginia Rykard Sweat. Leon's father, qualifying with a teaching certificate from normal school, had once taken room and board with the Rykard family while teaching in a one-room school house in Madison County. Virginia Rykard was his student, four years younger, and upon her graduation, the two married on Dec. 10, 1909. Thomas ran for school superintendent in Suwannee and served in that position until 1929 when he sought higher education at the University of Florida



- 1 Thomas W. and Virginia Sweat at home in Sanderson**
- 2 Thomas W. Sweat with a string of fish - Sanderson, Florida**
- 3 SWEAT COUSIN REUNION 1993 - Front row: Evelyn Fants, Geraldine McCarter, Mary Cooper, LaVada Hurst, Hazel Mears, Martin Mills; Second row: Leon Sweat, Billy Sweat, Tom Sweat, Buford Sweat, M.H. Fants, George Murray Fants**
- 4 Leon Sweat when a student at Sanderson School**
- 5 Lavada Sweat Hurst, Thomas Sweat, Virginia Sweat, Leon Sweat and Geraldine Sweat McCarter**



Back row l to r:
Irene Johns, Annie
Mae Green, Pauline
Kelly, Laverne Dice;
Middle Row: Clara
Jones, Meryl Woods,
Valerie Dinkins,
Jackie McClenny,
Teacher, Evelyn
Middleton;
3rd/front row:
Cicero Woods, Leon
Sweat, (Leon's dog
Runt) Warren Stone
and Morris Dowling

to complete his master's degree. After serving as principal of Hawthorne High School, where his wife also taught on her teaching certificate, the couple moved to Sanderson, where Virginia eventually obtained her degree at the University of Florida. Thomas W. Sweat, fondly called Thos, served as Sanderson School principal, and Virginia, as teacher, for 17 years each before retirement in 1951. Four of their five children -- Carrol, LaVada, Thomas, and Geraldine -- followed in their educational footsteps and some even chose educators as spouses. The latter three children taught school in Sanderson.

In 1993, the Sweats and many of their long-time friends and family members converged on the memorable spot to rekindle old friendships and memories. It was the first such reunion in Sanderson but the sixth for the Sweat cousins who are adamant about keeping their family legacy alive in the hearts and minds of their progeny. For the special gathering, Leon spent countless hours mounting dozens of Sanderson school photos and class group pictures to display. The collection once belonged to his parents. He purchased 50 "Sweat Cousin's Reunion 1993" T-shirts. There was music and dancing to go along with the 20-pound turkey, ham, barbecued pork and ribs and accompanying other good food, but mostly there was reminiscing about life in Sanderson during the 1930's when the grip of the depression was firm, jobs were few and money scarce.

"The first thing I remember about Sanderson when we moved here in 1934 was that we didn't have electricity, like we had in Hawthorne," said Leon. "Mama cooked on a kerosene stove there, too, because, only what we called the 'rich' had electric. My parents first rented a house (the present day Bevis home on Main Street), until it went up for sale. Daddy couldn't afford to buy it, so they rented another house that they were to live in the rest of their lives.

"When that house went up for sale, my daddy didn't have the \$600 to buy it, but the owner offered to apply the rent daddy had paid and let him pay the balance off over time, I imagine without any interest.

"I studied by the light of an Aladdin lamp, until my brother Carrol and I wired the house for electricity when it became available in Sanderson."

Leon said his father's school salary was around \$100 a month, and his mother's about \$60.

"I never remember when my parents were not extending their educations. One summer they even took a small apartment in Gainesville and my sister, Geraldine, and I went with them.

"They got paid for eight months of the teaching year, so my parents divided their business with two local grocers, Arthur Raulerson and Mamie Rodgers. They allowed credit during the three summer months they were without salary. When school started and my parents were once again working, the grocers' would divide the summer bill into eight parts and add it to their monthly bill for groceries until daddy got it paid off and then he'd start over again.

"I never got into trouble at school for I knew I'd get my tail whipped," he said. "Most of the time, the teacher just sent you to the principal's office and he did the spanking."

"School was the social hub of the community," said his wife, Neva, who taught at Sanderson. "We had plays and people walked from all around to attend. Even the school bus would go into the rural areas to bring people in. We had box suppers, and covered dish affairs at P.T.A. meetings or other special events like plays. Back then everyone came to P.T.A. meetings because it was a social event," she said.

"I had a dog named Runt that went to school with me," said Leon. "Everybody knew him. The school didn't have any screens on

the doors, so Runt would just walk right on in and lay down at my feet. When the bell would ring Runt would be the first one out of the room, and he knew exactly where the next class was and he'd go there and wait for me," he said. "I guess the only reason he got to do that is because my daddy was principal. I didn't bring him, he followed me. Some of the kids even fixed him up a report card once."

Leon said there was no school cafeteria when he arrived in 1934. "Someone put in a soup kitchen and later the government subsidized a cafeteria where we were served a lot of lima beans and corn-bread and split pea soup, but I still like it to this day. We paid a nickel for our lunch and when kids couldn't afford it they could make arrangements to eat anyway. We had little meat in those days.

"Quite often we'd go home for lunch and mama would open up a can of sardines, or salmon, and pork and beans. We'd eat them with saltine crackers right from the can," he said.

"My parents were the only ones who had a radio in Sanderson for years and sometimes, when a big prize fight was going on, there would be up to 50 people in our house, or on the porch, standing outside the windows and all out in the yard.

"And we had lots of parties in those days, like peanut boilings and dances. My mama would let us push the furniture, what little we had, up against the wall to dance. My older sisters, LaVada and Geraldine, taught us how to dance, I can't even remember when I didn't know how to dance," he said. "Some of the young people would bring mama chickens from their farms and she'd kill them and cook them for us."

Leon said Saturday was a big day in Sanderson that all citizens looked forward to but him. "During that time cows roamed all over Sanderson and on Saturdays, daddy had me out with a hoe and bucket picking up their chips to use as fertilizer in our garden," he said. "We usually worked in the garden on that day and that meant watering. It was my job to carry water from our 'pitcher' pump to fill big tubs daddy placed in the garden. I finally figured out how to syphon the water out of a tub I placed on the roof of our pump house through the water hose we'd brought from Hawthorne. As long as I would climb up there on a ladder and tote buckets of water to keep that tub filled

with water daddy could water the plants with the hose. To me that was a lot easier than carrying it to the garden."

Leon also had a few jobs he got paid for. "Well, after all my chores were done daddy would let me sell some of the vegetables from our garden. That wasn't always easy because most everyone had their own garden out of necessity, but sometimes I'd sell a few tomatoes for a penny each. Five cents went a long way back then. I could buy two of those big ole-timey cookies and a slice of baloney and cheese to go with it for a nickel. I'd make me a sandwich and, Oheee, that was good eating!

"I shined shoes and delivered the Times Union when I was a boy," he said. "Ice cream was delivered in Sanderson every Saturday by the Greyhound bus and it was a nickel a cup. I didn't always get any because I knew better than to ask daddy for a nickel because I knew he didn't have it. That's why I'd get out and work to make one, that is if anyone had any money to spend.

"If I spent a nickel I'd earned to buy a soft drink I would punch a hole in the cap with an ice pick to make it last longer because it was such a treat to get one. It sure isn't like today when kids take two or three swallows and leave it."

Leon remembers that there were four canned staples his mother faithfully used at least once a week because there was no refrigeration for fresh foods. "Mama would fix salmon balls from canned salmon, corn beef, canned fish roe and tripe. Sometimes daddy would go fishing and we'd have fish. Mama usually had pork and beans, cornbread and biscuits and lots of grits and gravy. One day a week, the Hagan Peters Grocery Company truck would come into Sanderson, bringing fresh meat, and mama always had her order placed for round steak. We'd have to go right down and get it and cook it that night because there was no refrigeration. We couldn't even afford the ice for our icebox. On the week-ends, mama would buy a live hen or fryer from the Raulerson store. Back then a lot of people traded the grocers' chickens or eggs for their groceries. Mama would come home, ring the chicken's neck, pluck it and either we'd have fried chicken or chicken and dumplings; usually on Sundays.

"Daddy rented a milk cow from Mrs. Emma Fraser Burnsed. He kept the calf penned up while he turned the cow loose every morning to graze. We'd let her in when she'd come back in the afternoon where her calf was and milk her. We always had plenty of buttermilk and clabber. When the calf started grazing, daddy would take the cow back to Mrs Burnsed and get another for us."

Leon's best friends were James Dobson, Millage Townsend and W.C. Sweat (no relation), and they often hunted rabbits in the woods together. On Sundays they would sometimes ride their bicycles the 12 miles to Olustee just to ride the girls around on their handle bars awhile before riding back to Sanderson. Leon remembers riding his bicycle the 12 miles to Macclenny once when the city fathers asked for volunteers to help pave Macclenny's first streets.

"They had a machine that dug up the dirt and mixed it with some type of oil and spread it out and rolled it. They wanted all the sticks and stones out of the way so that's what I helped do," he said.

There were only four graduates besides Leon in his class of 1939 -- Clara Jones, Jacqueline McClenny, Annie Mae Green, and Cicero Wood.

Because the school was small the students were all close-knit. Many of them were unable to graduate because they had to quit school to work on the family farm. "Today, they'd put a man in jail for keeping his child out of school," he said.

When Leon and Neva displayed their photos on that special weekend, some old timers they remembered were Mack Harvey, Elliott Alford, Willie Stafford, D.C. Cobb, Virgil Burnett, Johnny Bethea, Carl and Willie Stafford, Emory West, Gracie Jones, Warren and I.D. Stone, and Fletcher, Dennis, Wilford and Cora Lee Finley. Most of them are now gone and only the memory exists.

After graduation, Leon commuted to Jacksonville for awhile to work for Federal Mogul Service, the manufacturers of engine bearings for gasoline and diesel motors. A Sanderson resident, Mrs. Sally Stone, had moved to Jacksonville and was operating a boarding house. Leon lived there for a time, paying only \$5. a week for three meals a day and a room. Other than a four-year Army stint, at which time he served as a warrant officer and demolition officer at Camp Blanding, he

was with the company for 26 years. He met his wife, the former Neva Davis, from West Florida, in Sanderson after she was hired as a teacher by his father in 1941. The couple moved to Jacksonville for nine years during which time their only child, Skeets, was born in 1943. Leon's company transferred him to Montgomery, Alabama, for another nine years.

In 1961 the couple returned to Sanderson to be near his family and bought the Louise Burnsed general store. Neva went back to teaching. They employed someone to run the business they called the Sanderson Mercantile store. It was also a car garage, gas station, and parts store where Leon worked. They closed down in the early '70's and converted a nearby service station into a convenience store. They have since sold that and retired. Today, they enjoy their summer home in Cherokee, N.C., and the beach house they've had for three decades on Anna Maria Island.

This young-at-heart couple still enjoy dancing the night away in their own personal style when attending Blue Grass Festivals. Life for them has a rosy glow and they enjoy sharing it with their many family and friends.

At the first Sweat family reunion (most of whom were educators by profession) held in Sanderson, were: Buford and Ovida Sweat from Live Oak, W.E. (Billy) and Grace Earle Sweat from Bainbridge, Mary and Jim Cooper from Tallahassee, Tom and Hope Sweat, Jacksonville, Geraldine and E.R. McCarter and LaVada Hurst, Mulberry, Martin and Barbara Mills, Lakeland, Hazel and Clifford Weary, Tampa, M.H. and Doris Fouts, Orlando, Evelyn and L.H. Terry, Jr. Plant City, Nelda Sweat, Lithia and George and Gloria Fouts, Lakeland. And Leon and Neva's daughter, Skeets, a teacher in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Most of the families stayed in local Macclenny motels while visiting, and the following day returned to have their last goodbyes before departing for home. And the best part of all was that they found that their last glance of Sanderson wasn't much different than when most of them roamed around the unchanging town more than a half century ago. And they liked it that way.

Sammy Walker Of Macclenny

September 1993

"I owe a lot to the people of Baker County. They've always supported me and gave me my chance in life."

"My brother said to me, 'See that man over there?' I said 'yes', and he said, 'Well, that's one of your brothers.' I was amazed."

Sammy Walker

Six days a week, twelve hours a day, Sammy Walker is on the job at the corner of Main and College streets in Macclenny. Customers at Mixon Chevron find him friendly and cordial, eager to please, and always smiling. He has been there 28 years. Beneath the surface, cus-

tomers and Sammy's friends aren't aware of the internal wounds that scar his heart. And Sammy likes it that way because those scars have made him a better person, and appreciative for all he has.

He is a survivor!

Born in Clinch county, in the small

community of Council, Georgia, in 1946, he was one of 11 children born to 31-year-old Jannie Austin and 60-year-old Allen Walker. The fact that times were hard and his family poor has never bothered Sammy. That's nothing to be ashamed of, he says. But knowing that



Sammy Walker 1994

his mother was abused mentally and physically by his alcoholic father is one of the darts that pierces his heart.

The fact he is alive is a miracle. Three months after his birth, his mother cradled him in her arms, along with a 14-month-old brother, gathered some of her other children and headed down to the railroad tracks where she waited at the trestle for the first passing train. Desperate to escape the cruelty of her abusive husband, she made an attempt to board the moving train with both babies and the older children. Sammy slipped from her arms and lay on the gravel by the railroad tracks while the train carrying his mother and siblings roared away. He was found safe much later by a train engineer who had been alerted by train officials when the mother asked for their help in finding him.

He isn't sure what condition he was found in, nor can he imagine how he lived through that ordeal, but he was eventually reunited with his mother in Sopchoppy, Fl. As long as he can remember, he was moving from one location to another, his mother always living in dread that she would be found by his father.

"She was always on the run," he said.

He was kept in the first grade for six years. At one time, when he was in the fourth grade, he remembers living on a dairy farm "way back in the woods" and having to walk about 12 miles to school.

"There were not that many black schools," he said, "and we had to walk a long way to get to one. I had to pass by a ravine that was filled with water and I'd get so wet that when I would get to school I'd be so embarrassed."

Sammy's mother married five times; his father, seven that he's sure of, but he knows there were at least 22 children fathered by his father. Sammy was the only one of his known 33 brothers and sisters who graduated from school. He was the only one who never smoked or drank. He's not sure where they all are now.

"I was up in Georgia visiting my brother one time, and we saw this man sitting out front of a store with some other men, drinking beer. My brother said, 'See that man over there?', and I said, 'Yes', and he said, 'Well, that's one of your brothers.' I was amazed. No telling where they all are or what they're doing."

“The ones I grew up with had to look around for food sometimes, and I can recall how happy we were when the ditches would fill with water and we could go catch the crawfish. We made our own traps out of styrofoam cups. We’d boil us up a pot full, pull their tails off to eat ‘em. Oooooee, that was some kind of good eating!” he said.

“As I was growing up, I knew I wanted an education. I never had any desire to steal, rob, drink, or smoke, or just do the things some of the others did. I just never wanted to. I really wanted to make something of my life.”

And Sammy said it was the people in Baker County who gave him the opportunity and restored his faith in mankind.

“People like Mr. Doc Finley, Red Mixon, Mr. L.V. Hiers, Billy Rowe, and Willamina and Charles Lauramore,” he said, shaking his head as if in disbelief. “And I’ll never forget all those sandwiches Mr. Marvin Lauramore bought me when I was hungry. All of them are some mighty fine people. They gave me food to eat for physical comfort and friendship for my happiness. And I could never forget that as long as I live.”

“Mr. Claudell Walker says I’m his stepson that got left out on the beach to tan,” he remarked with a huge grin.

Sammy came to Macclenny with his mother when he was in the seventh grade to be near his stepgrandmother, Viola Austin, of Marietta. When he enrolled in Keller School, they skipped him a grade or two before he had to return to Jacksonville to finish his last three grades.

During this time, his mother became ill and was hospitalized for three months. He would either walk or hitchhike a ride the 12 miles to University Hospital at least four days a week to visit her. He was the only one of his brothers and sisters who did so.

When she died in 1965, he returned to Macclenny to live with his brother. He needed work and often picked up bottles to sell for some crackers and a drink. Then one day, Mr. Doc Finley asked him to work part-time at the Chevron Station sweeping up and doing other odd jobs. That very day, Billy Rowe asked him to work for him as a dishwasher at NEFSH. He did both.

“I had to be at the hospital at 6 a.m., so I’d walk, even if it rained, and it often did,” he said. “When I’d get off there, I’d head in to

Mr. Doc's station. Mr. Doc had been so good to me I just had to stay on and I'm so glad I did."

"I even worked for Mr. Paul Knabb in turpentine on my off-hours and Saturday," he said. "I only had one outfit of clothes for a while, and I'd get so dirty out in the woods. Every night, I'd wash my clothes out, then dry them, put them back on for the next day. I got paid \$4 for filling a vat and sometimes it would take me three days work to do it.

"This was a time when integration caused some problems for the black people," said Sammy, "but you know, they never bothered me. I could even be out after dark, and they'd be harassing other blacks along the way, but they'd say to me, 'Hey, Sammy, how you doing?'"

He is proud of that.

"The people in Baker County have never mistreated me. They've never called me 'nigger' or any other bad remarks. They've fed me when I have been hungry. I've eaten at their tables; they never made me feel any different because of my color."

In 1968, Sammy had saved enough money to buy a \$500 car. He loaned it to a friend and "It blew up." It was back to walking until his good friend, Billy Rowe, sold him a truck. And that wasn't all Billy did. He promoted Sammy from dishwasher to cook at NEFSH.

"I did such a good job for Mr. Billy that he made me supervisor of the kitchen, and I stayed at NEFSH for 26 years, until I retired," he said.

"And I finally got able to buy myself a brand new car," he said proudly. "I applied for credit down at Sands Chevrolet and gave Mr. Doc and Mr. Billy as references. I'll never forget that happy day when the salesman, Tommy Johns, called me and said my credit was okay and I could come down and get the car."

Things looked up for Sammy. He married, reluctantly, in 1969 and it turned out to be a bad decision.

"She was a husband-abuser," he noted sadly. "I didn't know when I came in from work whether or not she had a gun or knife to point at me." The couple divorced in 1980.

In 1982 he re-married. Luvisa Cummittee was a fellow employee at NEFSH. Sammy started going to the Church of God in Christ with her in Lake City where she lived. Their only child is Devan, age eight.

"She's wonderful," he says with a big grin. "She's like a missionary, she gives talks and all. She's great!" Luvisa retired from NEFSH after 18 years of service.

The couple lived in Macclenny, but the neighborhood became filled with crime.

"We were robbed of our possessions five times," he said, shaking his head in disbelief. "We moved to Lake City, and now we live near the college. On one side of me is a state trooper, and on the other a funeral director."

But Sammy feels Baker County is his real home. "I only live in Lake City at nights and on Sunday," he smiled. "The rest of the time I live in Baker County."

"The day Mr. Doc died on February 7, 1989, I was made manager of Mixon's Chevron. I've always given out bubble gum to the children of my customers and now I'm giving bubble gum to their children."

Sammy's father died at the age of 102. "I only saw my father twice. My brother took me to see him when I was 25. He just said 'Hello'. I went again to see him two years before he died, but there just wasn't any emotion shown.

"I don't look back on my life with bitterness. A lot of people went through the things I did. So many of them made the wrong choices in their life, drinking and doing drugs, stealing and robbing. I turned someone in for stealing not long ago. I don't believe in it. People work hard for what they have and it is wrong to take it from them.

"I owe a lot to the people of Baker County. They supported me and gave me a chance in life. I believe if you do good to others, others will do good to you. You've just got to try and want it yourself, and you can have it all if you work for it."



1 9 Point, 250 pound legendary "old stag" killed by Ode 1952. Ode and seven year old son, Bobby

2 Lula Hogan Yarborough as a young woman

3 Back Row (l to r): June Y. Walker, Juanita Y. Spurgeon, O.M. Yarborough, Ruth Y. Clark (deceased), Gloria Y. Mott, Faye Y. Combs; Front Row (l to r): Joshua Yarborough, David Yarbrough, Rufus Yarborough, Billy Yarborough (deceased) and Bobby Yarborough

4 Ode Yarborough Family - Back Row (l to r): Ruth Y. Clark, Juanita Y. Spurgeon, Donnie Mae Yarborough, 2nd wife of Ode, O.M. Yarborough, June Y. Walker, Faye Y. Combs, Gloria Y. Mott, Barbara Y. McCleod; Front row (l to r): David Yarbrough, Joshua Yarborough, Joy Tetstone, Rufus Yarborough, Billy Yarborough

Odis Marion Yarborough

June 1994

"I told her, 'If you don't kiss me, I'm never coming back,' and she bent down and kissed me and said, 'Are you satisfied,' and I said, 'No, I want more!'"

"She had a little ring she gave me and I lost it riding a bucking mule. I never bought her one."

O M Yarborough



Lula (Hogan) and Ode Yarborough

Odis Yarborough stands tall in the eyes of his descendants, although this remarkable 93-year-old giant carries a 5-foot 8-inch frame. He is the revered patriarch of a large Baker County posterity, having inherited a distinguished family

lineage that is faithfully remembered by the Yarborough offspring when they gather annually to recount the electrifying yarns spun by past patriarchs of long ago.

Although the massive Yarborough kin descends from European royalty, the Baker County Yarboroughs like to begin with Benjamin Franklin Yarborough (1824-1917) who was a member of the Georgia Cavalry during the Civil War. The family devotedly recalls the exciting and noble account of their great, great ancestor borrowing his neighbor Riley Johns' horse, and galloping away from his farm and family to serve his country's cause. Wide-eyed children sit enchanted as they hear how Great Grandpa Benjamin

returned home after the war on the same horse, riding it from Tennessee and over the great Smokey Mountains.

Benjamin's father, William Yarborough, Jr. (1802–1845), and his wife, Elizabeth Maranda Handley of Montgomery and Appling Counties, Georgia, were the parents of eight known children. Their great Grandpa, William Yarborough Sr., served in the Revolutionary War and later became a Justice of the Peace during the wild frontier days of our young country. Eventually the Odis Yarborough clan drifted into the Georgia Bend, around Moniac, and on into Baker County with Benjamin's son, David Jesse.

Tightly woven into the Yarborough family tree tapestry is the story of their American Indian ancestry. Their great grandmother, Missouri Powell Canaday, was the sister of the famous Chief Osceola. Missouri's granddaughter, Arabelle, married the son of Benjamin, David Jesse, who was Odis Yarborough's father.

So it is understandable that Baker County's remarkable Odis Yarborough clan values their family heritage and faithfully keep the Yarborough stories fresh in the minds of present-day, living Yarboroughs.

Odis was born March 22, 1901, in Moniac, Georgia. His parents, David Jesse and Arabelle Canaday Yarborough were hard-working, God-fearing citizens who were the parents of 11 children, eight of whom lived to adulthood.

"We had a good life," begins Odis, as he sits comfortably in the Macclenny home of his daughter, June Walker. "Daddy was patient and kind and I never saw him mad but a very few times in my life. He gave me the best whipping I ever had, that's for sure. One time, when I thought I was grown, I stayed out all night across the river at my aunt's house. The sun was way up there when I got home the next morning and daddy was already in the field a-plowing. When he seen me coming, he came right to the house. He grabbed me by the collar with one hand and a 14-foot cow whip with the other, and he wrapped that thing around me about seven times before he told me to see how quick I could get my clothes changed and get in the field a-plowing. I mean to tell you that I never left home anymore without telling someone where I was

going and when I'd be back, even after I was married," he said. "Yes sir, that was a fine whipping."

"This nation's done gone tee-totaling crazy 'cause the government's done taken the discipline away from the parents no matter what they do, but the Bible plainly tells you to spare not the rod and spoil the child. They've done tried to change the meaning of that and it's God's own word," he lamented.

Despite the fact he is a serious, long-time Primitive Baptist Minister, he laughs heartily as he tells his own stories, oftentimes combined with a hint of mischievousness. There is positively no question that he is a man of integrity. His explicit accounts of his experiences, and life in general, are straightforward and totally honest, as he views the circumstances. His children agree that he maintained a happy and secure home for them, although as stern as the one his father and mother provided for him.

David Jesse and Arabelle moved their brood from Moniac to the Macedonia section, north of Macclenny, in 1903 when Ode, as he is fondly called, was two years old. He paid \$250 for 80 acres of prime farm and timber land that included a large sturdy log house. In 1903, a new house was constructed, crafted from heart pine lumber purchased for \$12 per thousand from the Watertown mill at Lake City.

"About the first thing I recall about my life was coming to Macclenny with my daddy in a horse drawn wagon to attend big court, and he and a feller swapped horses. Ours was a big black one we named 'ole Deck' and we kept him for years," he said. "Later, me and daddy was in the field with ole Deck and one of daddy's friends, a Mr. Chancey, the ugliest man I ever did see. Ole Deck got spooked and I said, 'He must have seen Mr. Chancey's face', and I got slapped in the back of the head for saying it," he said, roaring with laughter.

"My daddy was a fine-looking man that lacked a little bit of being six feet tall. He had brown eyes and black hair and a mustache that curled out on the sides. He shaved it off a couple of times and I said, 'Daddy, let that hair grow back' cause I liked it better that way.

"My mama wasn't very tall. She was very dark complected and you could see a lot of Indian in her. She had black hair and wore her long hair balled up on her head, reckon 'cause she had a bunch of younguns. She wore long dresses to the ground and daddy usually wore hip britches with suspenders.

"Mama made all our clothes on a Singer pedal machine. She could make a pair of overalls in 15 minutes. She bought material, but she also sewed clothes for us using the feed and sugar sacks.

"Not long after we moved to Macedonia, our neighbor, Son Rhoden, lost one of his grown sons to typhoid fever. You get that from drinking bad water," he explained. "It was a real wet season and daddy had built the house somewhat on the lowland and so much water stood on the ground that our family was afraid to drink from the shallow well because of diseases, so my daddy got about 35 men together and had a log rolling to move our house to higher ground so we could have purer water.

"The men started working at daylight, slipping the house along the length of pine logs from which the bark had been removed on the top side. They wet the logs down with water to make them slippery and the men were working right along, until they began dragging along, drained of the energy they needed to push it up the slope to its new location on the east side of the 40. Finally, daddy sent my oldest brother to the house for a gallon of corn whiskey. He gave everybody a good stiff drink and then passed it around a couple of more times and it weren't no time before they got that house on the top of the hill and leveled it off like greased lightning. That was in 1906 and that house is still standing today," he said proudly.

Ode said he was about five years old when the Lord spoke to him personally for the first time in his life.

"I was out in the field eating raw peanuts the hogs had root-ed up," he said. "There weren't a soul out there in that field but me when something said, 'Odis'. I got up and looked around and I didn't see a thing in the world so I went back to eating peanuts. Then, directly it said, 'Odis', and I got up and looked again and I still couldn't see a soul. At the time I didn't know to say, 'Yes, Lord, here

am I' or I don't know what He would have told me, but I wasn't big enough to read the Bible back then. The third time He said, 'Odis' I ran to the house. I knowed it was the Lord because He is invisible."

Odis said the Lord would continue to speak to him throughout his life.

"I just wish I had of had enough sense the first time He called me like that boy Samuel did, to say 'Yes, Lord, here am I', but it was years later before I learned to obey the Lord when He called."

Ode grew up with his brothers and sisters, Jasper Lee, Dossie, Laura, Floyd, Gladys and Jesse Ray. Children who died in infancy were Easter Ann, George and an unnamed infant brother and sister.

"Mama cooked on a Home Comfort wood-burning cook stove. Daddy bought a barrel of flour once a year and we had biscuits and syrup on Sunday, unless we had company. We had lots of cows and hogs that roamed the woods and we butchered them every year for our meat and mostly we just ate what we raised on the farm. I loved to hunt and fish and roam the woods. I didn't even wear shoes until daddy made me. I must have been about 18 years old."

Ode said he quit school in the fourth grade when he was about nine years old and never returned.

"They moved the school and I never went to another," he said. Earl Franklin of Glen St. Mary was his teacher and taught him from the acclaimed old Blue Back Speller.

"I helped daddy on the farm and he'd send me into the woods to find the cows. I'd take off barefooted looking for them. I made friends with our big old red bull. We were buddies; I'd keep his horns sharpened, so he could fight better. Why, I'd run a thousand miles to watch a bull-fight. When I couldn't find them cows, I'd turn that old red bull out and follow him right to the cows.

"About my favorite thing to do was watch rooster fights," he laughed heartily.

"We had lots of fun on the farm. We didn't know it if we were poor. We were born before television, telephones, electricity, and indoor plumbing was available to our family. But mama kept us plenty of warm quilts on the bed, and daddy plenty of wood for a fire in the fireplace. We had all we needed, what with the farm and

God providing us the woods and streams. Oh, it was hard work when you think about it. Washing clothes took all day. We had to beat the dirt out of the clothes on a beating block until daddy got someone to cut notches in it so we could rub the clothes on the edge of the block. Then we hauled water from the well for the rinsing trough. And ironing was done by heating the irons on the wood-burning stove or fireplace. We didn't throw anything away; everything was used. It never wore out too bad to make a rag.

"We always had fun thinking up things to do. One day, my brother was in the outhouse sitting on one of those holes you cut out of the wood to sit on. Well, I remember I got me a cotton stalk and reached up under that outhouse and poked him with it and he thought a rattlesnake had struck him. He chased me through the fields and into the woods, but I out-run him. He never got me back because I didn't use the outhouse, my place was back of the corn crib." He roared with laughter. "We went swimming, but the girls didn't go to the wash hole with the boys 'cause we swam naked. Weren't no bathing suits available in those days. And we had frolics. My daddy and mama's house had many a frolic all night with banjo and fiddle playing. We had lots of fun and good memories," he said.

"Me and daddy used to leave before dawn and travel all day by mule and wagon to Jacksonville, arriving at dark. We'd sleep in the freight yard and early the next morning we'd be out peddling our sweet 'taters, chickens and eggs all over the town," he recalls.

"I stayed on the farm with daddy until one day I decided to catch the train with Josie Canady to Old Town, where a cousin lived. We went there to look for work, but everyone over there was sick with typhoid fever. I caught that train back the next day, but I still came down with it and was sick for six months," he said.

Ode had his eye on a pretty young girl he had watched grow up. She lived across the river, and he often saw her walking by his daddy's farm with her Grandpa.

"I knew we were made for each other because I saw her in the looking glass. I'd heard people say you could see your sweetheart in there, your future wife. Well, I took my mother's old looking glass and went up to Mr. Rhoden's old well and I placed that looking glass so the

sun was shining right through it. I stood there a little while and she came through there so plain, I could even see the freckles on her face. At first, I thought it was another girl, but it wasn't, it was Lula. Did you know you could do that?" he asked. "Well, my mama told me about a feller who went down there to see his wife come through the looking glass and they had planned to get married a certain day, but while he was looking a coffin came through and she died before they married. I heard about lots of people seeing their wives. You could only do this on a certain day of the year, June 22, and it has to be a lake or still water, can't be running water," he said.

A year had passed since Ode had seen Lula's face in the looking glass while holding it over the water in the well. So, while he was recovering from the fever, he paid her a visit one day. She was living in the home of her grandparents, Josh and Rose Hogan, about a mile and a half from his home. The two began courting.

"I can still remember the first time she ever kissed me," he said laughing.

"We were on the back porch and I was laying on a bench with my head in her lap and I told her, 'If you don't kiss me I'm never coming back,' and she bent down and kissed me and said, 'Are you satisfied?' and I said, 'No, I want more'! That's when I asked her to marry me, but I don't think she said yes that day. That's what you call sparking, you heard of sparking with a girl, haven't you?" he asked. "Well, after you spark, then directly you get married."

She was 14 and he was 20 when they got Willie Rhoden to drive them in his Model T Ford to Lucious Knabb's commissary in Moniac, where they were married by a Justice of the Peace named Staten Hodge on August 10, 1921.

"She had a little ring she gave me and I lost it riding a bucking mule," he said. "I never bought her one."

The couple returned to Ode's parent's home where they lived for the next few years.

"My mama fell in love with her," he said.

Their first child, Juanita, arrived in 1922. "I helped deliver her," he said. "Me and old Doc Mackee. I saw her little head and we just pulled it out."

Son Josh was born in a place they called the Frank Burnsed home, delivered by Dr. E.W. Crockett and Susan Thrift, his daddy's sister.

"The day Joshie was born I drank a full quart of moonshine whiskey. I made it myself," he said. "It was 100 proof. I made it and sold it because I was working for the Gotha Lumber Company for \$2. a day, and I could get \$10. for a gallon of moonshine."

The couple's next child, David, arrived while they lived in the Paul Hogan house, delivered by 'a darkie midwife,' he said. Then came a daughter, Ruth.

Ode followed in his father and grandfather's footsteps, hunting the wilds of the Okefenokee Swamp. He hunted for 'coons so he could sell the hides.

"One brought me \$10. I remember buying me the prettiest suit for \$15," he said. "Why, it'd cost you every bit of \$150 today."

"I was a good shot. I could shoot a quail's head off with him flying."

Yarborough Lake and Yarborough Island, deep in the treacherous Okefenokee Swamp, were discovered by Benjamin Yarborough, who died at 96, and his son Riley, who were both avid hunters and explorers of the treacherous outdoor arena.

"I loved to shoot fish and that was the second time I knew God was dealing with me. Lula kept telling me I was going to get caught. It's against the law to shoot fish," he said. "But I went to Macclenny one morning and bought some bullets and borrowed me a 32 rifle. I hit the woods and headed to the river. It was a full moon in March, pretty cool, and I stopped by some friends to eat and to get me a half pint of whiskey. When I got to the river, I found a big one; it was a bed-minder that weighed about six pounds. I seen one that must of weighed 25 pounds but he'd never get where I could get him with the rifle, so I got up in the tree to shoot down and I got me another one. He weighed about nine pounds.

"I kept shooting fish until the Lord stopped me. One day I was down by the river and I saw two trout come along and I said, 'you know, them trout fish need eatin'. I had my gig with me and every-

thing was so quiet. Here he come and I shot him and jumped in to get him with my gig and the water was so deep I couldn't find the bottom, not even with my gig, and I'll tell you something you won't believe. I sat on that water just like a cork, I was light as a feather, and something pulled me up and my feet hit the ground. Then that fish just swam up there and laid it's head on the bank. I knowed what it was, the Lord was showing me I was doing something wrong so I said, 'that's the end of it, and I quit shootin' fish for ever more. I took the fish home to eat him, but I knew the Lord knew I was breaking the law and he did that so I'd quit."

Ode remembers that the county could be a rough place to live, especially the Saturday night shoot-outs and frequent murders and other crimes.

"Why, even the passenger trains pulled down their shades and ran full speed ahead with the whistle wide open while passing through town," he said.

In 1925 Ode packed up his family and with the help of a friend, John Burnsed, moved all he owned to Jacksonville in John's truck. For the next 22 years he would work for the City of Jacksonville. He started out at \$18. a week.

The family first lived on Edison Avenue. After they moved to Forest street, a son, Billy, and daughter, June, arrived, followed by a daughter, Gloria, a son, Rufus, and a daughter, Faye, all delivered by Dr. Thomas. Their last move was on Roselle Street where they enjoyed their first electricity. Their last child, Bobby, arrived there.

Odis united with Zion's Rest Primitive Baptist Church in Jacksonville on August 10, 1940.

In 1946 the family returned to Baker County and bought a farm near his parents' old homestead. Ode farmed and worked, chipping timber for turpentine.

"I was way up there in life when I became a Christian," he said. "One day I was chipping turpentine boxes when that preaching hit me and I threw that hatchet down and ran from the woodpile to the woods. I was preaching just as hard as I could and when I got through I had to go find where I'd throwed my hat. Boy, when the Lord gets a hold of you He can scare you half to death. From that time on, I'd

preach to my mule, every cornstalk in the field and every tree in the woods. I even preached in my sleep, but Lula soon got tired of that and told me my preaching needed to be done in the church and to quit disturbing her sleep.

"I knew the Lord was trying to deal with me, but I kept putting it off," he said. "Then my youngest child, Bobby, got sick. I fell on my knees and promised my Lord that if He'd heal my son, I'd stand on the walls of Zion and cry aloud His holy name.

"Well, the Lord healed my son, but it was two years later and I still hadn't kept my promise. One day I was walking through the field and the Lord spoke to me right over my head. He said, 'Did you not make me a vow you'd stand on the walls of Zion and cry in my name?'

"Well that scared me to death and about all I could get out of my mouth was, 'Oh Lord, you knowed I was a liar when I said it.' That's all I could say; then I cried.

"That was a Thursday and on Friday, me and Lula went to Jacksonville and stayed with our daughter, Juanita. Our membership was still in Zion's Rest, so we were going to a meeting there on Saturday. I didn't set on the back seat, but the next one to it and I was the most miserable person in the world. They were singing and having the biggest time that day you've ever seen. Nobody in the world was more miserable than me, but when it come time for the preaching, the minister come right to me and got me by the arm and said, 'Brother Yarborough, the voice of this church is that you come to the stand.' I didn't want to go, but everyone was saying 'Go on up, Brother Yarborough, go on up,' so I went up there and they said I preached about 30 minutes without stopping and I been at it ever since. I bet I've preached about 300 funerals."

After Lula had a dream, she told Ode she felt it was time to move their membership from Zion's Rest to Oak Grove Primitive Baptist Church, near their home. This was a significant move because Lula had always told him she had seen her funeral preached many times from Zion's Rest.

Ode and Lula Mae eventually moved their membership to Oak Grove Primitive Baptist, the church Ode attended with his family as a child. He was ordained to the ministry on November 3, 1956, at Oak

Grove and then called to serve the church as pastor on May 4, 1957. He has faithfully served there, as well as pastor of Union, Mount Zion, Salem and Wayfair churches (all in North Florida) for many years.

"When they first called me to Oak Grove, we had about 15 members and after I was called we had about 72, but lots of them are dead now. My daughter, Faye, and son, Billy, are members," he said, proudly

"I don't preach to my children, but I tell them what's right or wrong. When you raise your child right and they get grown, they are either a child of God or they are not. If they are a child of God, He'll deal with 'em and I know He's dealt with some of my children and I think He's whipped all of 'em a little bit. I'm pleased with all my children. You take Rufus, he knows that Bible by heart."

Ode roamed the fields, hunted and explored the swamps just as his father and grandfathers before him. And as far as it is known, he conquered the biggest quest of all. It happened in 1952 when he and seven-year-old Bobby were hunting with a pack of hunting dogs, scouting for the legendary Old Stag in Columbia County's Bear Island in Pinhook Swamp.

Old Stag was a legend in the area, having been caught when just a little speckled fawn. The young buck was castrated and marked with a crop-gilt and underbit before being released in 1930. He'd been sighted over the years but shrewdly eluded seasonal hunters, including Ode, who sought to capture the trophy. Unlike the famous illusory Bambi, Stag was a factual, real-life monarch of the woods.

"It was the day after Christmas," Ode said, leaning forward in his chair and looking me square in the eye as he began his celebrated story. "There he was, big as a mountain when he stepped from behind some saplings. I thought at first Santa Claus had lost one of his reindeer. He was enormous and had the biggest set of antlers I'd ever seen. I raised up my shotgun and with a single load of buckshot, at 70 paces, I got him in the rear end. Then he turned and ran back in the swamp. I took off after him with Old Bruce, the only dog I had that wouldn't run doe or yearling, nothing but a buck. All my other dogs had done dropped out of the hunt that had started at daybreak."

With his heart pounding at a fast rate of speed, Ode found his 90-point, 250-pound trophy lying in the murky, turbid water deep in the swamp with one colossal horn sticking out. Ode quickly tied the dog's leash to an aged antler and his renowned prize was floated out to dry land.

It took four men from one o'clock until sundown to tote Old Stag a distance of two miles to Ode's truck. When the ancient buck was stretched out in the back of the pick-up, his head hung over to the bumper. After 22 years, the mark on Old Stag, put there in 1930, was still in perfect condition.

Ode had the sovereign of the forest's head, with its 90 celebrated points mounted and he proudly displays its picture in his home. It has been the subject of many news articles and recounted as the truest story told among the endless deer hunting yarns.

When Ode's beloved companion, Lula, died of cancer on August 28, 1965, he was devastated.

"I was lost as I could be," he said. "Then the Lord talked to me again.

"I had known Donnie Mae Laine of Starke for years. I'd see her at church meetings and mentioned to her once about marriage and she said, 'Brother Yarborough, I can't marry you.'

"She'd been a widow about ten years and had two children she was still raising," he said. "I don't think she intended to get married again.

"Then one day I had gone deer hunting and about four in the morning the Lord appeared to me, and this is what He said. He said, that is between you and Sister Laine and He said you and her can live in peace the rest of your lives, and that just lifted me up to the top. I even saw a halo over her head."

Meanwhile, the Lord spoke to Donnie Mae and the next time they met Ode told her about his experience. Donnie Mae told him she had been touched too, and that she would marry him. The couple married, with their children's blessings, on March 12, 1968. Since all of Ode's children were out on their own, he moved to Starke and helped Donnie Mae rear her two children, Barbara McLeod and Joy Tetstone.

"I love them like they are my very own," he said with a big smile.

Ode's children say they thank God for Donnie Mae everyday.

"We credit her with keeping our father in his excellent condition. She has been a wonderful wife," said his daughter June.

Ode visits Baker County often and still pastors Oak Grove Primitive Church. He describes himself as a 'foot-washing, hardshell, Primitive Baptist Preacher' -- one of a breed of religious fundamentalists who are not too numerous today, but are still strong in their traditional customs.

The Oak Grove congregation meets on the first and third Saturdays and Sundays in each month, and the annual meeting, where the traditional foot-washing is held, is a three-day gathering in April of each year. Foot-washing is a solemn ceremony in which the members take turns washing each other's feet as a symbol of humility, as depicted in the Bible, he says.

He often thinks of his goodly parents.

"I was there when my daddy died. I was holding his arm when an angel came and took him beyond and showed him there was life beyond this veil of tears. I didn't see the angel but I knew something was happening. Then daddy said, 'Their robes are so beautiful that your natural eyes can't even look at them'. My natural eyes couldn't see that perfect angel, but I know he was there."

Ode hopes his posterity will continue to have the annual reunions and keep the family ties bound.

"I want them to love one another and stay together. I've seen children grow up to hate one another and that is a bad thing to do. They got the same blood and when Gabriel blows that trumpet I want them to be ready. People are scattered today and don't know who they are. They may have folks, but they don't know it.

"I pray to God for every child of every nation, kindred and tongue before I go to sleep at night because He paid for 'em and they'll be there in heaven; every child of the living God will be there because Jesus Christ died for 'em. His blood washed every child as white as snow."

And what does he think of all the progress made since he was born 93 years ago?

"Well I didn't believe it when they went to the moon. They said they went, and showed pictures of it, but they can do so many things now that you don't know whether to believe it or not. God said He would do great wonders and that might have been one of 'em, but I'm still thinking about it!"

Like Old Stag, he says, 'seeing is believing'!

GENEALOGY

David Jesse Yarborough, born Feb. 14, 1867, died Nov. 25, 1948

Arabelle Canaday Yarborough, born March 4, 1877, died July 25, 1942

David and Arabelle married.....

Children: Easter Ann March 26, 1897–Nov. 16, 1898

Jasper Lee Feb. 4, 1899–Sept. 1979

Married Rosa Crews: 2 children: Edwin and Elmer Wray

Odis Marion, Born March 22, 1901

Married Lula Hogan: 10 children: Juanita, Joshua,

David, Ruth, Billy, June, Gloria, Rufus, Faye and Bobby.

Infant Son, Born and died April 9, 1905

Laura, Born Oct. 24, 1906–Died Feb. 7, 1974

Married Shubert Kirkland: 1 child, Dorothy Yarbor

Dossie, Born Apr. 6, 1907–Died Sept. 9, 1981

Married Charlie Burnsed: 6 children: Neil, Ralph,

Ira, D.J., Lonnie, Virginia.

Floyd Henry, born July 14, 1911–July 23, 1982

Married Loma Crawford: no children

George, July 29, 1913–Dec., 1913

Gladys, Born Jan. 23, 1915

Married Selvin E. Harvey: 2 children Wilma,

Selvin E., Jr. (Bud).

Jesse Ray, Born July 26, 1917– Jan. 17, 1991(add date)

Married Irene Lyons: 5 children, Ray, Barbara,

Jimmy, Tommy, Judy.

Infant Daughter, Born and died July, 1922.

Bob Kirkland of Macclenny, Florida

"My daddy just moved us from one place to the other, sharecropping. We didn't have no real home, just an old place we'd move into and then grub it up for plowing and hoeing."

Bob Kirkland

Two miles north of Macclenny on 23-A, Bob Kirkland Road jets to the left down an unpaved sandy country lane before it ambles off to the right and passes by the neat modest home of its namesake. Roaming cows graze contentedly in the surrounding fields, as little banty chickens idly scratch around the barren ground for whatever sort of grub it is they eat. A batch of playful kittens scurries about while several listless yellow cats stretch idly in the cool shade of the tall pecan trees that screen the humble abode of this six-foot, two-inch entity and his wife Sadie. It's as inviting as a cool glass of homemade lemonade on a sweltering hot day, and that's exactly what you might be offered if you stop by.



Country home of Bob and Sadie Burns Kirkland on Bob Kirkland Road north of Macclenny

Bob Kirkland's story doesn't begin or end with affluence or fortune, yet it is the priceless hallmark of an American epic. One of twenty-three children reared by his mother, Dollie Estelle Carroll, he is the personification of a true American pioneer symbol. He is one of the last of his kind and it may only be God who understands and knows the man's true valor and merit. He was born into a poverty-stricken existence, yet emerged a humble man of distinction and prominence.

His life began in a modest room of a simple home in 1911, where his beloved mother gave birth to him on a handmade Spanish moss mattress, at the mercy of a self-taught country midwife. He was the fifth of ten children born to her and Joe Kirkland, a tenant farmer.

Eventually this brave and noble woman, pregnant with her tenth child, divorced her rugged and abusive husband. Then, with much courage and stamina, she gave a neighbor where she was living in Nassau County some chickens to move her family and meager belongings back to Baker County in a horse and wagon. She managed alone with her brood of children for many years before she married a goodly man by the name of George Ealie Johnson, Sr., a poor widower with ten of his own children. The couple then had three children born to them. In all, 23 children and an astonishing posterity has inherited this novel legacy, which is truly a remarkable American saga.

"I can tell you one thing, I never went to school a day in my life," he begins while sitting in a comfortable glider on the front porch of his tree-shaded home in north Macclenny. A soft wind blows gently as he leans forward with piercing green eyes and square jaw firm, "we just didn't know nothing but work, from before daylight until after dark -- that's all we knew -- and there was just no time to even think about school. We had to eat," he said.

"My mama would buy cloth in big bolts and make all the clothes we owned. We didn't have no underwear, we didn't even know what underwear was.

"My daddy just moved us from one place to the other, sharecropping. We didn't have no real home, just an old place we'd move

into and then grub it up for plowing and hoeing, just move and move like that from one place to another all the time. I particularly remember one house we lived in was built back in the war days and it had scuttle holes in the walls where you could put a gun through to protect your family.

"We'd put all we owned in an old wagon pulled by a mule and move on, the smaller children walking alongside the wagon while some of the bigger younguns' would try and hold onto the sides. And we just moved and moved from house to house. I didn't do nothing but work, that's all we knew from morning to night and nothing in between. Just go to sleep at night and get up the next morning to do work -- and you weren't too little either. If they gave you a job to do you better get it done, 'cause if you didn't you would get a peach tree sprout about that long," he said, indicating about five feet, "and when they turned you loose you'd be willing to do anything.

"As a real small boy, about seven or eight, I'd plow and my hands wouldn't even reach the plow bars. I'd hold onto the cross bar and when that thing got out of control it would knock you upside of the jaw, but you best not complain. People now just don't know nothing about that kind of work, they're living in heaven and don't even know it. When I grew up there was all work and no play."

He remembers a special time when a cousin, who lived in the Maxwell area, came to visit.

"We slept about four to a bed, and one of my older brothers noticed he was scratching like a dog with fleas on him, and it turned out he had that ole seven-year-itch disease and we all got it. We didn't know what it was until then and they smeared sulfur and grease on all of us. Everybody was a diggin' on their hide. It was terrible."

Discipline was a must in the household with such a large family, he said.

"Mama had to keep control. I remember one morning we were eating breakfast and I told my brother Lacy to pass me some bacon. Well, he didn't do it, so I told him, 'if you got any sense

you'll pass the bacon', and mama caught me right across the mouth and went 'Bop' with a backhand lick. It learnt me then how to talk and stay out of trouble," he exclaimed.

Christmas was just another day, he said. No one had heard of Santa Claus, or about getting presents.

"We might kill a hog and the family would gather and have a big meal. We might not work on Christmas day, but I don't remember when I first heard about a Santa Claus or presents.

"I don't even remember when I got my first pair of shoes, but I know I was a grown boy.

"I really loved my mama, I thought she was the only woman in the world. She took care of us the best she could and kept us together. She worked harder than anybody."

After farming all day the children often went fishing at night.

"We had a 22 riffle, and we'd hold a fire of 'lighter' wood in our hand and go into the water about waist deep until we'd see a fish and the light would blind 'em, so we could shoot 'em. We didn't have nothing like a flashlight back then so we used a lighted torch.

"We never did go hungry, we always had grits and bacon, sweet taters and things from the garden. I've eat a lot of cornbread with good homemade syrup. You can't find a bottle of good syrup anymore, they just don't make it like they used to.

"Did you ever see a mule-footed hog?" he wanted to know. "Well my daddy went up to Georgie and came back with a male mule-footed hog. It weren't long before all the hogs around were mule-footed."

His first job was working with the Gothe Brothers at their sawmill. He and brother Steve rode a logging train out into the north Baker County woods where large cypress trees were being cut and transported by train.

"We made 25 cents a day," he said. "The company worked with mules, too, and if you hit one of 'em you got fired. The mules were trained to follow your commands easy."

Eventually he stopped working long enough to notice the girls.

"I never saw a girl I really liked a lot until I met Sadie and I still like her," he said smiling at his wife of 62 years sitting across from him in one of the cozy porch rockers.

The young couple met when they were neighbors, at a time when 16-year-old Sadie, daughter of Adolphus and Nellie Reynolds Mobley, was married to 17-year-old Earl Mobley. Four years and one son later, young Mobley was killed, and Sadie was a youthful widow with a small son when Bob came calling on her. She was working for Hardware Brown and his family, cooking, cleaning and tending to a large two-story building Brown owned in downtown Macclenny; she was paid room and board and three dollars weekly.

The young couple had no car, no place to court, and no money to spend, so they attended church together and spent time at the home of Sadie's older sister, Mae, and her husband, Dan Thrift. Bob says he doesn't remember his first kiss, but he remembers getting plenty of them 'when the sun went down'.

He was twenty-one years old, unemployed and poor, but he made arrangements with an elderly widow, Mrs. Braile, who lived in a large rambling home, for Sadie to cook, clean and give the widow care and assistance in exchange for the couple's free rent. When he presented the idea to Sadie she accepted. Bob borrowed \$10 from a friend, Massy Hurst, and the couple was married by Elder W.R. Rhoden on March 23, 1932 in Macclenny.

Jobs were almost impossible to find in the Depression, but he later found work with the WPA (Works Progress Administration) in south Macclenny making a dollar a day, and sometimes less.

"Sometime they didn't have a dollar to pay us, so we'd get what they did have, maybe seventy-five cents, but there wasn't any use to say anything.

"We didn't have no set hours to work. We started at day light and if they wanted you to work to dark you worked to dark or after, there wasn't any system to it. We didn't even question it because there was a lot of people hunting for jobs and if you quit there would be someone there to take your place," he said.

Bob and his hardworking, resourceful wife planted a large garden at the Braile place and while he worked long, hard hours

with the WPA, Sadie was left with the plowing and hoeing, housework and tending Mrs. Braile and her young son. She was familiar with hard and demanding work. Like Bob, it was the way of life she had been born into, and work was all she knew. Together the couple scrimped and saved hoping for a place to call their own someday.

Sadie had been hoeing all day when their first child Wilma arrived, delivered by a midwife because the doctor was, as Sadie tells it, 'on a drunk'. She smiles with pride when she relates the story of how Bob thought his daughter was the most beautiful baby in the world. Another child brought added responsibilities.

"My stepfather built me the body of a bus and I started driving children to school twice a day for \$52.50 a month. Gas was 15 cents a gallon," he said. "The bus had a cloth top that could be pulled over the cab if it rained. There were benches on both sides of the bus and a row of seats built down the middle for the smaller children," he explained.

Soon the couple was able to buy a four-acre spread in Glen St. Mary.

"It wasn't much of a house, but it was made out of good material, cypress boards three feet wide with batten on the outside to cover cracks," he said.

He's not sure what order the next events occurred in his life, but he worked a long time with Southern Resin Company in Pine Top driving company machinery. He worked on roads and remembers that some of the road graders were pulled by four mules. The couple bought their first car about this time, but after three or four payments they couldn't meet the expense and had to return it. The couple sold their home and four acres for \$600 and moved back to the Braile place, 'for another season' said Sadie.

Eventually Bob's stepfather and mother bought the old Garrett place and Bob and Sadie said they paid their part for 15 acres of land and a shell of a house.

"We had a lot of people come over and help us get the house on logs to move it down the hill," said Sadie, who spent the day preparing food beneath the trees outside in the yard for all those who came to help.

A son, Robert, joined the family. "It was the hottest August I can remember when he was born," she said.

Later the couple had an opportunity to purchase 63 acres of prime land. They daringly borrowed \$10,000 from the bank, then shrewdly cut and sold the timber to rapidly pay off the loan. They hired W.C. Gilbert, a local housemover, to relocate their house from the Garrett property to their new homestead. The couple's last child, a daughter, Joan, arrived here on December 29, 1949.

"We moved the out buildings on logs with a tractor," said Sadie. "I skinned the bark off the trees myself to build that barn," she noted as we looked across the grass-free yard to the quaint and picturesque building sitting adjacent to the road. A nearby smaller, weather-beaten structure [*describe it better -- a shed, or what?*], moved at the same time, lends old-fashioned charm to the scene.

For a while Bob worked for the county road department and many citizens in need were given free assistance in those days, he explained.

"You could do just about anything you wanted with county equipment back then," he said. "If people had problems you just went and helped them out. We'd use the county drag line if anybody needed a water hole dug for stock. We'd do it for 'em neighborly. We could make extra money on the side by selling the dirt from the hole for \$5 a load," he said, adding that he earned more money that way than his salary for the county.

Bob worked hard by day and hard by night. Sometimes he was gone for long periods at a time, building roads, installing a pipe line that runs close by his home and other jobs that required him spending nights camping out close by his work.

"When I was home, I'd get up way before daylight and go to plowing on our land to make a garden. When I'd see a light on in the kitchen I'd know Sadie was getting breakfast, so I'd come in and eat, then go to my job. At night, it was back to work around the farm until after dark," he said.

Looking across a span of land, Sadie pointed to a vast cleared area and said proudly, "Me and the children dug up all the stumps and cleared that land ourselves."

Sadie, known as one of the best cooks in the county, taught her children to cook, too. Today, her talented daughters own one of the most popular eating establishments in the county. [name?]

It's a known fact the couple has worked hard all of their lives and now they find it is hard to know when to quit. Bob still tends to a few cows and chickens although Sadie has asked him to slow down some. They are often humorous, and share their feelings openly.

"I used to drink a little, but one day I quit and never went back," he said.

"Yes, that's because I prayed to the Lord you'd quit and you went to throwing it up," quipped his wife.

Sadie makes it obvious her greatest blessing would be for Bob to join the Church of God and be united with her in the faith.

"Well, I was sprinkled when I was little up there at Macedonia," he explained. "It don't do no good anyhow," he said.

"Yes, he and my first husband, Earl, were sprinkled on the same day with a whole bunch of other kids, and they both got a whipping for running away," said Sadie.

"Well, I was sprinkled anyway," he said. "And I don't drink or cuss. Well, sometimes I might get aggravated with a cow or a hog and say something, but it ain't bad. I don't hate anybody because even if someone does something bad to me it would only make it worse, so I just don't hate anyone. And I really love my children," he said.

"What about a vacation, or belated honeymoon since you two have worked so hard all of your lives?" I asked.

"Bob's never taken a vacation in his life, but I went once with my niece to Washington State," said Sadie. "He was raised hard and he's practiced that right on and that's all he knows. He's still working even though we've got a better living now than we had when we were coming up," she said in a serious tone.

"Well, back to the honeymoon, Mr. Bob. Do you think you'll ever take her on a well deserved one?" I asked.

"Well, I'm looking for her to carry me on one," he said with a twinkle in his eye and a slight smile creasing his impish face.

"If he catches me so we can go to heaven, that's when we'll go on a honeymoon," said his wife with loving resignation.

The couple has generously allotted ample portions of their land expanse to their four children. It offers comfort and solace to them as they hear the pitter-patter of their grandchildren's feet romping over the same earth as did their children. They relish heritage and trust in its eternal reward.

Though the archaic life continues with work and no play, the two occasionally stop to share a few restful moments while sitting together in the quiet aura surrounding them that sets their world apart from today's fast-paced environment. Whether you are driving by, or dropping in, you instantly acquire a perceptive feeling of good people and a time drifting by. The secluded country charm is almost enviable. The panorama and charm of simplicity easily lures one with longing to sit a spell on the enticing porch furnished with inviting rockers. And whether a cool breeze blows beneath the tall shade trees and touches your brow, or a light rain offers a rare treat of a tin roof symphony bouncing off the nearby barn, it is a moment in time that is indelible just like the people beneath the quaint little home's snug roof.

FAMILY MEMBERS

The ten children of Joe and Dollie Estelle Carroll Kirkland are:

JAMES CORBETT KIRKLAND who married Mae Johnson. Their children are: Mildred, James, George, Harry, Jack and Ethel. After Mae's death, he married Lecy Richardson Rhoden whose four children are: Ellis, Jewell, Riley and Iris. The couple had two children, Gary and Sherry Kirkland.

NOLA LEE KIRKLAND Nola Lee married Lavader Lee Deese. Their seven children are: Ralph, Corine, Edith, Lavader, Frank, Paul and Jewell.

VANIS MITCHELL (MITCH) KIRKLAND Mitch married Lonnie Bell Denton. Their one child is Vanis Mitchell, Jr. Mitch and Lonnie Bell

divorced and Mitch later married Emily Cone. Their one son is Kenneth Kirkland.

JOHN STEVENSON KIRKLAND Steve married Nova Irene Garrett. Their four children are: Dollie, Fred, Windel and Joe.

ROBERT LACY (BOB) KIRKLAND Bob married Sadie Burnsed Mobley, widow of Earl Mobley. Their son is L.W. Mobley. Bob and Sadie's three children are: Wilma, Robert and Joan.

SHUBERT KIRKLAND who married Laura Yarbrough. After they divorced, he married Nellie Spearing.

ELIZABETH (LIZZIE) KIRKLAND married Alton Crawford. Their two sons are Tony and Tommy.

J.B. KIRKLAND married Ressie Smothers.

JOSEPHINE (JODY) KIRKLAND married Frank Crawford. Their four children: Mickey, Jimmy, Carolyn and Gwen. After their divorce, she married Guy Arnold and the couple reared Gwen's daughter, Jody Hartsfield.

EDGAR KIRKLAND Edgar married Camilla Ash Johnson, whose daughter was Dorothy. Ed and Camilla adopted two girls, Penny and Jeanie. After Edgar and Camilla's divorce, he married Nona Holliway.

GEORGE EALIE JOHNSON, SR.'s children brought into the marriage with DOLLIE were

MAE JOHNSON who married James Corbett Kirkland. Their five children are; James, George, Harry, Jack and Ethel.

E.D. JOHNSON

O.V. JOHNSON married Camilla Ash. Their daughter is Dorothy Johnson.

MORRIS (BILL) JOHNSON married Mittie Duggar. Their two daughters are: Eloise and Floy Mae. Mittie died and Bill married Katie Dorman.

GEORGE LOUIE JOHNSON married Lizzie Williams

MARIE JOHNSON married Melton Crawford. Their eight children are: Dorothy, Bennie, Mary, Frances, Huston, Noland, Richard and Joan.

NETTIE RUTH JOHNSON married Ednefield Bowen.

WOODROW JOHNSON married Sadie Crews. Their five children are: Norman, Patsy, Jerry, Sammy and Tommy.

ETHEL JOHNSON married Ray Haislop. Their daughter is Ina Rae. Ethel later married Glen Raymond.

ADDIE OVEDA JOHNSON married Edward Gordon Emerson. Their three children are Oveda, Adela and Edward Gordon, Jr. Oveda later married Albert Twildahl.

**GEORGE EALIE JOHNSON, SR., AND DOLLIE CARROLL KIRKLAND'S
THREE CHILDREN ARE:**

GEORGE EALIE JOHNSON, JR. married Inez Rhoden. Their two children are Larry and Elaine

ROSA ESTELLE JOHNSON married Leslie Croft. Their two children are Betty Jean and Leslie (Bill) Croft

TEX JOHNSON married Betty Stradling. Their three children are Riclay, Mike and Odette.

DOLLIE KIRKLAND was the daughter of **J.B. CARROLL AND ELIZABETH KING**

More about the life and times of Bob Kirkland can be read in the life sketch of his wife, Sadie Mobley Burnsed.



- 1** Lautice Dugger and his wife the former Sarah Lee Crawford. Married September 1930
- 2** John Calhoun Crawford father of Sarah Lee Dugger and Mamie Combs. He was a Primitive Baptist.
- 3** John Calhoun Crawford, Sr. Primitive Baptist preacher - died 1912
- 4** Sarah Lee Crawford and Lautice Dugger and their oldest daughter, Bobbie Sue (Rowe)
- 5** Bertha Mae Bennett Crawford, wife of John Calhoun Crawford and mother of Sarah Lee Crawford Dugger.

Sarah Lee Crawford Dugger/and Mamie Crawford Combs

August 1993

Sarah Lee Crawford Dugger



**Sarah Lee Crawford (1995)
wife of Lautice Dugger**

Just before her 13th birthday, Sarah Lee Crawford was like most other girls in rural Baker County. It was the era of the Great Depression, but if her family was poor, she wasn't aware. She had enough to eat, enough to wear, and parents who loved her.

But things changed one damp and dreary day, just after a frightening rainstorm passed through the north Macclenny area

where she lived. Sarah remembers the mammoth oak tree in the side yard steadily dripping glistening raindrops as it cast a dismal shadow outside her ailing mother's bedroom window. It was July 10, 1926.

"My father was out of town, working during the fruit picking season," reminisced Sarah in the comfort of her small, cozy frame home. "Mother wasn't feeling well and the other children and I were sitting with her, when three of her friends unexpectedly arrived. They were Vallie Burnsed and her mother, Mrs. Hogan, and Lula Yarborough. They had no more than said hello to her when she began to make a funny noise and I began to tap her on the face. But she died instantly. There were six of us children home alone with mother that day. I was the oldest. We had no phone, no close neighbors, no car. By chance, those three women stopped by, just as if the Lord had sent them to be with us at that moment. I'll always believe he did." said Sarah.

The six children were Sarah Lee, Mamie Frankie, Dan Edison, Bernice Mae, Geneva and the baby, Virgil Robert. Their parents, Bertha Mae (Bennett) and John Calhoun Crawford were poor, but proud and honest farm people, and good and caring parents. The home, now shattered with tragedy, would leave a lasting impression on each of the children's lives.

"People don't realize how wonderful it is to have a mother," said Mamie (Combs), as she and her older sister reminisced about their Baker County heritage. "We never had our mother to go home to and we missed that very much." Their mother was the daughter of Hiram and Safronie (Rewis) Bennett.

After their mother was buried in a hand-crafted pine coffin in near-by Oak Grove cemetery, the two older girls took over their mother's duties and began caring for their siblings and the home.

"We cooked on an old wood-burning stove, cleaned house, washed the family's clothes in a big, old-timey iron wash pot out in the yard. Then we had to press them with those old heavy irons we heated on the wood stove or fireplace. We mopped with an old corn shuck mop, and tended the garden; whatever needed to be done, we did it," said Sarah. "I taught myself to sew. I'd sit down and cut a pattern from paper and make the children some clothes on my mama's pedal sewing machine. I got pretty good at it later in life and even made some of my own suits and coats," she said.

"Daddy went to work everyday and left us to take care of the smaller children. Then, when our chores were done, we'd all play. The baby, Virgil, was just a toddler. Today, the HRS would be there immediately to remove us from the home and separate us, but we made it and did it without any serious problems," said Mamie.

"We all knew to mind daddy. He seldom had to punish us; all he had to do was look across the table at us and we knew what mind-ing was," said Mamie.

"Some of the children dropped out of school, and some continued," said Sarah.

"I had finished sixth grade and Mamie, the fifth, so neither of us returned."

"Daddy got lonesome for mama and about every few months he'd get to drinking, but he was never mean to us, he was always good," said Mamie.

"I really look back now and realize, even more, all he did for us and what he must have gone through to keep us all together," she continued.

John Crawford moved his family around a lot after the death of his young wife. He often took seasonal jobs picking fruit. Mamie remembers one twilight night when they were driving a small two-seat Model T Ford down a crude rocky road on their way to pick fruit in Plant City.

"Our car was packed with all our things, plus six children; you can just imagine the scene," she said. "I was about 14 years old and sitting in the open door of the car when I started to stand up and lost my grip and fell out. At first they didn't even miss me. The last thing I remember was standing up. I was knocked unconscious. They took me to a doctor, and after I woke up I was okay."

That was not the only close call the children had. Once when the family was grinding cane, Daniel was feeding the mill while the horse was making its circular sweep. Suddenly his head was pushed between the mill and the long wooden pole. Sarah screamed for the horse to stop and it did -- just in time.

"I'm sure it would have pulled his head off if Sarah hadn't got the horse stopped," said Mamie. The incident resulted in Daniel having a large permanent scar on his face.

In another terrifying event, baby Virgil ran through the kitchen one day just as Sarah was carrying an iron frying pan filled with hot grease across the room. It scalded the child's head so badly that a large spot on his scalp never grew hair again.

The children never had a Christmas tree and to them the holiday was just another day. "Mostly, we would get some fruit," said Mamie.

"Once, when I was real small, before my mother died, I got a small doll and I was so proud of it," remembered Sarah. "I tied a string around it and hung it on the living room wall so nothing would happen to it," she said.

The family did not attend church. Occasionally, Sarah and Mamie would visit near- by Oak Grove. "But our father was a believer," says Mamie emphatically.

His father, John Calhoun, Sr., and his grandfather, Gideon Crawford, were Primitive Baptist ministers.

John Calhoun, Sr. died in 1912, the same year Sarah was born, and though she never knew him personally, she displays a large picture of him in her home.

"I know he was a good Christian man," said Sarah. "as was my great grandmother, Elizabeth Roberts."

The girls occasionally got to go to dances in the area. "We'd get so excited, we couldn't even eat supper," said Mamie.

Sarah left home when she was about 16 to live with cousins, Lawton and Sallie Crawford, in Jacksonville, and to work at the King Edward Cigar Factory. She visited home often and on one such visit, she attended a party in a neighbor's home. While playing a game, she found herself standing directly across from another player named Lautice Robert Dugger. The two instantly liked each other. After a brief courtship, they married in September, 1930, at the home of Judge Beard in Baldwin.

Lautice was a young, popular barber in Macclenny, making a scant living giving

25-cent haircuts and 15-cent shaves. The young couple lived in several locations, including an apartment over the old Macclenny post office, before hiring local contractors, Lacy and Jesse Mobley, in 1935 to build them a home on SR 228 north. They never moved again. Their first daughter, blonde, green-eyed Bobbie Sue, was born in the front bedroom, delivered by Dr. Edward Crockett on January 30, 1936. Another daughter, dark-haired, brown-eyed Martha, came along 11 years later.

It was important to their father that both of his daughters play musical instruments. They both became accomplished musicians on the piano and accordion. Martha majored in music at the University of Florida.

It was years before the petite young mother would have electricity or running water. She would wash up to 150 towels weekly that Lautice used at the barber shop, ironing them with a hot cast iron. She pumped water from an outdoor hand water pump, still visible in her back yard today, to do the family's laundry.

She never joined a social club or organization although the other women in town tried to encourage her. Once, when Bobbie Sue

was a small child, she learned to play the Hawaiian guitar. A teacher from Jacksonville came out and gave Sarah and other town people lessons in her home.

Lautice loved to fish and could catch a string of speckled perch long enough to match his five-foot-four-inch frame. The one thing the couple loved to do more than anything was to “go to frolics.”

“I loved it so much, and we’d go anytime there was one,” she said, with a twinkle in her eye. “Back then we danced in people’s homes, like Mr. Jim Sands. And we also had street dances in Macclenny and in the old community center west of town. Someone would come around with a loudspeaker on a car announcing where it would be, and we’d always go. I just plain loved dancing and we went every chance we’d get.” she said.

Then one day that changed. “I joined the Primitive Baptist Church in September, 1950,” she said, tears falling from her pale blue-green eyes. “It is now my life, my everything. I’ll never forget the day I was standing outside in my back yard beneath that big pecan tree and that car came around announcing a big dance going on in town. I didn’t have one bit, I mean not even one little bit, of desire to dance, and I never have since,” she said.

“There just comes a time when you just trade one life in for another,” she said, with great emphasis. “It’s just as simple as that!”

Mamie belongs to the same church but she joined in 1980.

Sarah and Lautice were baptized in a deep ditch filled with water from the swollen St Mary’s River, north of Macclenny at Twin Bridges.

The church is located just around the corner on North Street and in walking distance from her home. She remembers that Herman Moody was her first pastor for about 10 years before Rev. James Land came and stayed for the next 20 years plus. She thought they were wonderful. Now she smiles in satisfaction as she tells about the young Rev. David Crawford who came to the church at age 17 and is now nearing his second decade as her pastor.

“David started preaching when he was about 14 years old and he just lifts you up through the ceiling,” she said with a big grin. “I mean David really knows how to preach, and he is a wonderful and caring person as well.”

Sarah said she can truthfully say that in the past 43 years she has only missed church services about a dozen times, maybe not even that many, but she'll say 12 just to be sure she doesn't tell a "fib."

"I don't miss attending my church meetings for anything, not even reunions," she said.

The spritely five-foot-three-inch resourceful lady has her own vegetable garden and spends much of her time stashing away the food it produces in her freezer and canning jars.

Husband Lautice, who retired from his barber shop after 40 years, died September 7, 1982. He had suffered from Parkinson's disease for the last 13 years of his life. Before his retirement, haircuts had inflated from twenty five cents to two dollars.

Lautice's parents were Charlie and Addie (Rhoden) Dugger, who raised a family of nine children besides Lautice: Guy, Mallivene, Lorene, Ilabell, Retha, Daniel, Ruby and Doris.

"He was a good man and we were real happy. I don't mean to say we didn't have our little arguments sometimes, and I might not speak to him for about an hour or two, but then most of the time we just got along real good," she said, with a smile.

Today, all her time is devoted to the church and her family, the two most important things in her life. Daughter Bobbie Sue, a talented floral designer, married Jimmy Rowe, now retired from Gulf Life Insurance Company. From this union she has two granddaughters, Patricia and Julie. And through Patricia and Greg Bennett, she now has two great grandchildren, Justin and Brooklyn Suzanne.

Martha, a former music teacher, is now one of Baker County's most successful educators. She is married to Tim Starling (currently Baker County School Superintendent). They have two sons, Shay and Brett, who Sarah says treat her more like sons than grandsons. "My family is the reason I say I am so blessed in this life -- so much so, that it's impossible to describe my feelings."

Mamie married Lester Combs from Sanderson at the age of 16 and the couple has three children, Daniel, Shirley and Wayne. She and Lester ran Combs Grocery at the corner of 23-A and Macclenny Avenue for 26 years.

Daniel, retired from Central Truck Lines, and his wife, Mary Lou, have three sons, Mike, Timmy and Darren. Timmy and his wife, Melody (Raulerson), have one son, Dusty. Darren and Natalie (Dinkins) have one son, Casey. Shirley owns Baker Loan Company, and her husband, Billy Rowe, who works for NEFSH, have two children, Pam (Hartley) and Butch. Pam and her husband, Jimmy, have presented her with grandchildren Brant, Brandy and Brandon. Wayne, who has owned Jiffy Junction in the same location as his parents' grocery for the past 18 years, and his wife, Gail (Dowling), have three sons, Rob, Vic and Reagan.

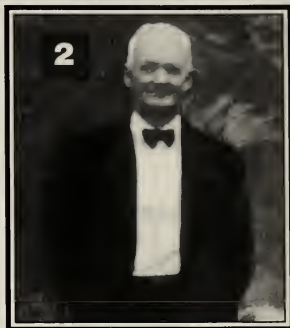
All totalled, she has eight grandchildren and seven great grandchildren that reap her family's heritage.

The two sisters said that later in his life, their father married their mother's sister, Ella Crawford (Johns), but it didn't work out.

"I know he devoted his life to us, and the fact he kept us all together as a family is more important to us now than we could have ever realized as children," said Mamie. "Each of us have our own homes and have had successful lives," she said, "and I know that would make him very proud. I think that is a great accomplishment under the circumstances."

"I often think of our mother and wish she could have seen how her family turned out. I think she would be very proud of her children and their families," said Sarah.

"We look back on our life with a lot of pride. It was a good life. The only way it could have been better was for us to have had our mother with us longer," said Sarah as her bright eyes quickly fill with tears that gently fall on her cheeks. "You see, I still remember that rainy day when I patted her face and she was gone so quickly from us."



- 1 Ida May Matthews Padgett - wife of Barney J. Padgett**
- 2 Barney Jackson Padgett - husband of Ida May Matthews**
- 3 Mary Estelle Padgett Ferry**
- 4 Ida Estelle (Corbett) Matthews**
- 5 Wallace "Wally" Ferry**

Mary Estelle Padgett Ferry

Macclenny Florida 1994

"We escaped with only the clothes on our backs. Back then there was no fire station, and water had to be pumped by a hand pump into buckets. Neighbors did all they could to help us, but both homes, including daddy's treasured library, lay in ashes."

Mary Estelle Ferry

Mary Estelle (Padgett) Ferry spent most of her life on the corner of Sixth Street and Macclenny Avenue where she grew up in a large rambling frame home with an inviting front porch adorned with comfortable rockers and porch swings. It was a place of peace and tranquility. She remembers it as such, as she played with her six siblings, Harlan, Frances (Dronet), Iva Dell (Rhoden), Stanley, Allen and Selene (Mikell).

At the time she was born, March 24, 1921, there were no paved streets in the county, The Citizen's Bank had not been founded, no railroad depot had been constructed, and the no-fence law allowed for large animals such as cows and pigs to roam the downtown area. Cars were rare on the streets where she played and walked to school. Instead there were horses and buggies, mules and wagons. *The Baker County Standard* was the town's newspaper and Avery G. Powell was the publisher.

Born into a life where education was important and books regularly were read, she grew into a refined young lady, early on. Her father was B.J."Barney" Padgett, a name listed among the most respected men the county has ever known. Her mother, Ida May Matthews, hailed from a distinguished heritage that helped establish many important aspects of Baker County's history.

Barney Jackson Padgett came into Baker county as a young schoolteacher. Originally from Suwannee County, he moved here with his wife, Vida. The young couple had three children -- Floreda, Walter Brantly, and Penny.

The Padgetts made friends easily, and one was their neighbor, young and vivacious Ida May Matthews, the daughter of Frank Harlan and Ida Estelle (Corbett) Matthews. Frank Matthews, born in Chicago, had moved to Baker County in 1890 with his parents, James Bosworth Matthews and his French-Canadian wife, Margaret Newman. James, originally from Lockport, New York, was a newspaperman in Chicago. After he settled in Baker County, he established *The Macclenny Sentinel* newspaper. That was the year their son, Frank, met the pretty and vivacious daughter of Charles C. and Zilphia Crowningshield Corbett, Ida Estelle. The Corbetts had moved to Baker County from Vermont hoping to improve their health, distressed by asthma. Charles was a stone cutter and funeral director and was distinguished as Baker County's first undertaker in 1880. Ida Estelle had grown up prim and proper under her parents' native New England influence.

Ida Estelle and Frank Matthews were a happy couple and their marriage produced two children -- a son, Frank Maynard, who died in the 1918 flu epidemic, and a delightful little daughter they named Ida May. Six years later another tragedy struck the family when Frank took a job as a Union machinist with the Illinois Central Railroad and lost his life when shot by a "scab" during a strike.

Several years later, Ida Estelle married her first cousin, Cecil Corbett, and they had two daughters, Edweena and Carneeta.

The Padgetts lived across the street from the Corbetts. The town was small and friendly and Ida May visited often with her friend, Vida. When Vida became ill, it was Ida May who helped take care of her and tend her children. Tragically, Vida died. Barney took the three children from his marriage to Vida to live with Vida's parents in Lecanto. Kind and gentle, intelligent and respectful, Barney Padgett was someone Ida May's mother admired and respected, so when he proposed marriage to her daughter, she readily approved. After their marriage on August 6, 1919, Ida moved with Barney to Archer and Tallahassee while he was employed with the State

Department of Education. When the couple returned to Macclenny, he became the first principal of the Macclenny school, as well as coach of the first basketball team. In the late '20's, the people of Baker County elected him their state representative and he also served as their mayor.

Eventually Mr. T.J. Knabb hired the capable and well-liked Barney as comptroller of the Knabb Turpentine Enterprises. Barney moved Ida May and his four children to a one-story frame home next to his employer on College Street.

"It was a nice peaceful street," said Mary Estelle. "The people were nice and friendly. The street was unpaved and back then most people had a horse or mule they used for transportation.

"Daddy had a large library of books, and he read to us a lot. We learned to love that part of our lives, as he shared so many adventures with us," she said.

Then, one night, after the family had gone to bed, a late summer lightning and rain storm was raging outside their normally secure door. A streak of lightning struck the T.J. Knabb residence and the home went up in a blaze, quickly spreading to the Padgetts' home.

"We escaped with only the clothes on our backs," said Mary Estelle. "Back then there was no fire station, water had to be pumped by a hand pump into buckets. Neighbors did all they could to help us but both homes, including daddy's treasured library, lay in ashes."

The couple and their four children moved in with Ida May's mother on the corner of 121 and Macclenny Avenue, and never moved again. Ida had inherited the property which was all the west half of Lot 27. It is the only original dwelling still remaining on the main street of town from that era.

"After the fire, we didn't have anything of our own, it had perished in the fire, but I remember that Mr. Bob Knabb had a shoe store and he brought all of us pairs of shoes to wear to school. I don't remember where our clothes came from, but we didn't miss a day of school because of the fire," she said. Her brother Stanley was born the following month.

Barney Padgett was a tall man, 6 feet 3 or 4 inches, said his reddish-haired, blue-eyed daughter.

"He treated us kids so good, we were spoiled rotten, but I'll tell you, if we were doing something we weren't supposed to and he said 'stop that!', just by the tone of his voice we stopped..

"He and my mother were very devoted parents. It was only after mother was gone that we began to realize a lot of things we never knew before, like the sacrifices she made for us. She went without things so we could have, like she only had one pair of shoes at a time; she wore the same pair to work in and to dress up in," she said.

In the beginning, the Padgett family attended the First Baptist Church in Macclenny. "My grandmother was one of the founders," she said. "In later years, the family attended the Episcopal Church and took an active part in community affairs. Mary Estelle began school in Macclenny's wooden school facility and remembers two special friends she made that first day -- Bill Barber and Alma Carter Rhoden. They are still very close friends. In 1939 Bill Barber was in her graduating class along with Charles Barber, Alan Boyd, J.J. Crews, Mary Davis, Alabama Dicks, Frances Dowling, Izetta Estes, Lois Fraser, Marie Hodges, Billy Knabb, Russell Lee, Claire Lott, Jewel Lyons, Van Reynolds, Lucile Rowe and Houston Sapp.

That same year, these headlines announced in *The Baker County News* dated June 9, 1930:

High School Graduates And Basket Ball Players

On Trip To Worlds Fair in New York.

A number of the graduates of the Macclenny High School, as well as a number of the basket ball players of the past term of School left Macclenny and boarded a Greyhound bus in Jacksonville for a trip to Washington D.C. Tuesday where they visited two days before proceeding to New York where they will enjoy the wonders of the Worlds Fair for one week.

Professor L.L. Dugger, Principal of the local School and Miss Karlie Tyler, a teacher here went along to act as chaperons.

Those making this trip besides Mr. Dugger and Miss Tyler were: Mary Estelle Padgett, Frances Dowling, Bobby Lee Knabb, Sarah Poythress, Jean Boyd, Clara Sue Lott, Allan Boyd, Jimmy Dugger, Charles Barber, J.J. Crews, Billy Knabb and Lillian and Marvin Brown, a total of fifteen.

The entire crowd left as Joyous bunch in anticipation of the wonders that they can tell of upon their return to their homes in Macclenny.

Both Mr. Dugger and Miss Tyler are to be complimented upon their selection of this trip for their graduates and ball players as it will probably be of untold educational value.

Editors of *The Baker County News* were Al Parker and Q.T. Milton.

"I started attending Florida State College for Women (now Florida State University) in 1943 with a Bachelor of Arts degree," said Mary Estelle. "While there, I belonged to the Alpha Chi Omega Sorority. I had planned at first to be a lawyer, but over the years I changed my mind. I taught school but I found out that wasn't my calling, so I went into accounting and that career lasted 40 years."

While in her last semester, she met Wally Ferry, whose National Guard Unit had been called into service during the escalating World War II dilemma. His 192nd Field Artillery group was in training at Camp Blanding and on weekends, he and his friends enjoyed coming over to Macclenny.

"I had met a lot of people I liked," he said, "like J.J. Crews, Tiney Crews, and Warren Fraser. I was raised in a small town in Danbury, Connecticut, and I liked coming here. We'd take a room at the Hotel Annie and enjoy the chicken dinners and meeting the good-looking women," he said.

"The first time I ever saw Mary Estelle was on a Sunday afternoon in 1941 when she was being baptized in the Little Saint Mary's River and looked like a drowned rat because they had just dunked her under. But I like red hair," he said smiling.

"It was love at first sight!" she exclaimed.

"It was for me too," said Wally.

The next time the couple saw each other was when Wally stopped over in Tallahassee and visited her at college. He was on his way to Camp Shelby in Mississippi to continue his training. It wasn't long before a letter arrived from Camp Shelby with a proposal. The couple was married by Judge Frank Dowling on August 7, 1942 in her parent's home in Macclenny. The twosome left town, travelling on a

greyhound bus, for a honeymoon in Daytona Beach. Upon their arrival, they rented an efficiency apartment one block from the beach.

"When we got back to Macclenny, I had one dollar to my name," said Wally. "I gave her fifty cents and kept fifty for myself. I already had my ticket to Camp Shelby."

She was 21 and he was 23 when they married and too young to be separated. But war has no mercy. Wally had to ship right out.

"I went to Camp Shelby with just enough time to say goodbye," she said.

She taught school while Wally was on his way to the South Pacific.

"We were on the water 28 days after we shipped out of San Francisco," said Wally. "We landed in New Zealand and then took the southern route as Japanese had already taken over so much of the area. We wore a patch much like a maple leaf for our insignia. A lot of people thought we were Canadians. We cut 50,000 Japanese off at Wewak Beach Head. I lost many friends on every island we fought on. We used 155 millimeter guns."

He saw action in the Battle of New Guinea, the Philippines, Solomon Islands and Guadalcanal.

Mary Estelle received Wally's letters regularly but with some of the text missing.

"They censored our letters because they didn't want us letting our families know where we were, yet every night we got Tokyo Rose broadcasts from Japan saying, 'Hey, you 43rd Division, how do you like it on the shores of (wherever we were). It didn't make sense. Japan could know where we were but we couldn't tell our family," he said.

Wally sailed beneath the Golden Gate Bridge on September 21, 1945, his 26th birthday. Mary Estelle expected him home but did not know exactly when. She had been visiting his parents since September in Danbury, Connecticut. When Wally reached San Francisco to be discharged before heading out to Danbury, he was shocked.

"There were so many of us they couldn't process all of us coming in, so they gave us a week's pass without any money or clothes. Fall was coming on in New England, and we only had cottons from our

South Pacific base. We refused to leave until they gave us some warm clothes and money. They provided us with some supplementary pay, about twenty dollars and clothing, and I hitchhiked to Danbury and called my family from there. My daddy and Mary Estelle came down to get me."

The couple stayed in Danbury until after Christmas. Wally asked if she would like to return "home." "I told him I did," said Mary Estelle. So Wally bought a 1935 Chevrolet for the trip home. "He said I was a different person when we crossed the Baker County line," she smiled.

Wally went to work for Barney Padgett and the two men became fast friends.

"He taught me to survey. He was really a humorous person and nice to be around. I remember his telling me one story about when he was a young boy back in Suwannee County. He said that they never had any trouble telling what kind of flour the families used because when they went to church and the girls 'got the Holy Ghost' and were rolling around on the floor, they could read the signs like 'Ballard flour'."

Mary Estelle and her father built an office and opened an abstract company, copying all the county's records by long hand. She and Wally lived in an apartment over the building next door to her parent's home and that's where their only child, Dicky, was born. Wally did a variety of things such as working for the State Road Department and building and operating an automotive parts business, which is presently owned by their son.

They purchased a lot and built their present home on it in 1951. It was part of the Leona Knabb estate and they remember the large homestead that set way back off the road surrounded by the towering pecan trees that still grace the area. It had once been owned by the James Fraser family.

"I found the old well one day that belonged to the Fraser family," said Wally. "I think it's out there beneath the driveway," he said.

From their front porch, they can look across the street at the old homeplace where memories of a great family legacy abound.

The couple's greatest joy is their son, Dicky, who lives next door to them with his wife, Theresa, daughter of Lois and the late John

Milton. "He is such a good son and we just love him to death. He is so good and respectful to us," said his proud mother.

The Ferrys are proud of their son and rightfully so. Besides being a very successful businessman and race-car driver, he has done as much, or more, than anyone else in the county to preserve Baker County's first history. Some of his historic finds have revealed the course of history. One of his exhaustive explorations led to his discovery in Florida of the exact location of Fort Moniac, which had been previously established by the government to be in Georgia, where a monument was erected during the 1838-39 Seminole Indian War

Dicky's historic finds include numerous artifacts reflecting different periods of time. In addition to pinpointing actual historical sites, he has located many original roadways used by Florida's earliest settlers.

Dicky's love of history motivated him to establish his own publishing company and he has republished some very valuable out-of-print historical books, including *Soldiers of Florida*.

Because of his special interest in the Civil War, Dicky is often asked to speak at historical functions and his special collection of Civil War memorabilia is one of the best in the nation.

He teaches auto mechanics at Baker County High School and successfully owns and operates an auto parts store in Macclenny.

While the couple are proud of their son, he shares equal honors with his wife.

"The best thing Dicky ever did was marry Theresa. We just love her to death," said Mary Estelle. "I think of her as a daughter, not a daughter-in-law and I will never figure out how she does so much."

Dicky and Theresa have two children -- Richard, who followed in his father's auto race-driving hobby, and Karen, who this year married James Campbell.

"There have been many influential people in my life," said Mary Estelle, "but there is one person that has influenced me more than anyone other than my parents. That's Lonnie Dugger. He encouraged me and was always so wonderful. He taught me in school and Sunday School as well. He is a wonderful person," she said.

Lonnie Dugger served in many capacities in the educational system including Superintendent of Schools.

She has been a faithful member of the First Baptist Church since 1941, serving as treasurer for ten years. She holds charter membership and is a past Matron of the Leona Knabb Chapter of the Order of Eastern Star Lodge #212. She is a charter member and past president of the Macclenny Business and Professional Woman's Club, a charter member and past officer of the Baker County Historical Society, and a charter member of the Andrew Jackson Padgett United Daughters of the Confederacy, which is named in honor of her great grandfather. She served as a Baker County School Board member for eight years; she is a past member of the Baker County Advisory Committee on Vocational Education, and is a trustee of Woodlawn Cemetery Association. She is one of Baker County's most beloved, respected, trusted and esteemed citizens, called by those who know her, a friend, a good friend. You would need to know Mary Estelle to say you understand why. She is a caring person who, over the years, has cultivated many friendships by her affectionate and kind charm. Numerous are the people who are remembered by her thoughtfulness with a card or phone call on birthdays and other special occasions. She is quick to admit that the pain of separation from her friends through death is not easy. Two special ones that she counted her best are the late Mazie Drawdy and Loyce Coleman. They cross her mind in thought and memories everyday.

In a picturesque corner of her mind, she carries a panoramic view of the treasured memories of days gone by when every man, woman or child she met on the street was someone she knew, when locks on the doors of homes were practically unheard of, when a man's word was his bond, when old timers were respected and friends were loyal and true. It's hard to go anywhere in Baker County where you find someone who does not know and respect Mary Estelle Padgett Ferry. She is a woman of honor, who values her heritage and respects the legacy passed to her by a great lineage of people who planted themselves deep into the soil of Baker County and left a sturdy root system to carry on their name and fame.



Harry Richardson

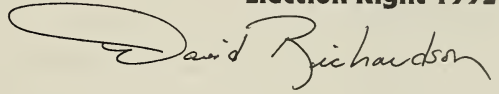


Harry Richardson cleaning fish

Harry Richardson

"I told 'em when they came down to apply for the job, there wasn't any openings in the clerk's office, but they applied anyway,"

Election Night 1992

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "David Richardson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping initial "D" and a long, trailing flourish at the end.

When Harry Richardson was laid to rest among the graves of his pioneering ancestors in South Prong Cemetery south of Sanderson on Monday, September 20, 1993, scores of people gathered to bid him farewell beneath the towering old oaks that shaded his grave.

What made Harry Richardson, a simple man, humble, modest and even shy, so popular, so revered, and so respected?

His family, friends and co-workers didn't have to wonder. What made Harry Richardson different was found in the scriptures he had underlined and marked in his personal Bible. The Rev. Ray Dobbins of the First Baptist Church in Sanderson selected a few of them to be read during the Monday afternoon funeral service which was held in the First Baptist Church in Glen St. Mary before a crowd of an estimated one thousand persons. One of Harry's favorites is found in 2 Corinthians: Chap. 12, vs. 9,10.

"And He said unto me,' My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

As the bronze and gold casket was lowered into the ground, grown men, friends and colleagues openly wept. "His kind will not likely pass our way again," said long-time friend and county commissioner Melvin Dowling. "I think Harry knew people loved him. I put him in the same class as I always have Joe Dobson, and there are just very few, if any, left like them" (Joe Dobson was a former Baker County Clerk of Court who died in February of this year. He served the county as clerk for 32 years).

Dowling said he had known Richardson "all my life" and that the two had never had, "even one misunderstanding."

"We were swamp buddies, we fished a lot together."

Ralph Davis, a neighbor, also has known Richardson "all of his life." "I can remember so well when Harry was just a little tike, maybe four or five, and he began to go fishing with us to the old dried-up wash holes over there in Green's Creek (So named for Harry's progenitors).

Davis said that usually in May, there was little rain and that Harry, Harry's father, Lacy, and some other neighbors would go 'coonin' and seining in the bed of the river.

"All of us would have to chase the snakes out of the shallow water holes so we could catch the fish who were holed up there," said Davis, who is about 13 years older than Richardson. "And Harry would be right in there, little as he was, pulling out those fish and slinging those snakes out of those holes."

"We didn't have shoes back then. If we did have a pair we couldn't get them wet, so we were always barefoot."

Davis said that Richardson always had something about him that stood out differently from most people all of his life.

"There is usually one in a family that stands out and he was just one of those kind of people."

Richardson's friend, Robert Combs, lingered at the cemetery later than most. "I didn't know him for a lifetime like most folks out here, but I know he was a wonderful person, and really a lot of fun."

Combs plays in a band with former county commissioner Watson Goodwin who is a good friend of Richardson. "We play for a lot of hunting camps and fish fries, and Harry's usually there. Watson will always say, 'Now, Harry's going to sing Blue Eyes Cryin' in the Rain after midnight because he sings better then.' And Harry would. He might not sing but a line or two but he'd always sing that song for Watson -- after midnight, of course."

Employee Donna Stafford has worked for Richardson since he took office in 1981. "He never turned anyone away who needed help, regardless of who they were, and he never had a bad word to say about anyone," she said.

Donna said her employer never asked her to mix business with politics. "Harry never asked his employees to become involved in politics, even when he had opposition. He never questioned us as to who we were supporting or if we would support him. He told us he would appreciate it if we could support him, but he never asked us to. He told us to just keep doing our jobs, and when you have a boss like that you don't mind doing it," she said.

Another of Richardson's employees, Debbie Crews, said Richardson wasn't "just a boss," nor was he "just a politician," but rather like a father. "He has helped us through all kinds of problems," she noted. "Harry would help anyone, and I mean anyone, even off the street. Race or color never stood in Harry's way. And he never expected anything in return."

Mrs. Crews said she remembers the day Richardson told them he was diagnosed with cancer. "We all cried together," she said.

Last Thursday, she stopped by Richardson's Sanderson home before going to work. Earlier he had told his wife, Jennie, that he wanted to stop by the office for a couple of hours while she ran errands. He got up early that morning, shaved and dressed in his white shirt and dress pants.

"Come here," Richardson's wife told Mrs. Crews. Mrs. Crews looked and found Richardson sound asleep in his chair. They didn't wake him. "When he awoke, he told his wife it was too late for him to go to the office and maybe he'd try again tomorrow."

Richardson died the next day, Friday, September 17th.

"He never gave up the fight. He really wanted to live," said Mrs. Crews.

No one will disagree that Richardson was a county political favorite. He won last year's re-election by a landslide in the first primary over two opponents with a total of 4801 votes.

When called late election night by a *Baker County Standard* reporter for a re-election comment, Richardson quipped, "I told 'em when they came down to apply for the job, there wasn't any openings in the clerk's office but they applied anyway."

That comment didn't surprise John Barton, supervisor of registration and long-time friend and court house buddy of Richardson.

"He was a shoo-in. He's got more friends than anyone I know," said Barton. "And it won't take but a minute to sum him up," he continued. "We had coffee every morning, either in my office or his," said Barton. "Harry loved his family more than anything, and over half of his conversation every morning would be about his family."

Barton said people knew Richardson would help them. "People felt comfortable around Harry. He was a humble and meek Christian. If Harry knew people had a need, he did his best to help them. In fact, Harry couldn't rest until he could do something. I saw this over and over throughout the years."

David Richardson, his son, remembers life with his father as ideal. "Daddy was always the same whether he was working in his garden or down on the job at the court house. Everyone knew that about him.

"Just like his office door, our door at home was always open and people were welcome," he said. "Our home was always home away from home to a lot of people. It was like a big community home where everyone came to play ball and have fun. Our friends never had to ask our parents if they could eat with us, they just knew they could, and we never had to ask our parents if they could eat or even sleep over, it was always understood they could. As we grew up and started families of our own, I think daddy really missed that."

Eight years ago, Richardson married his current wife, Jennie Massey. Together, the couple plunged into helping extend the First Baptist Church in the county. In fact, the couple had to move from their church home in Glen St. Mary to lend assistance and help establish the First Baptist Church in Sanderson.

"Our parent's home was always full of children at Bible School, or preparing for some kind of function at the church," said daughter Gina Tanner of Glen. "You just couldn't ask for a better life than they gave us children," she said.

Jennie Richardson said she sees many of Harry's qualities in his children.

"I see a little of Harry in each of his children and the influence he has made in my children's life is evident," she said.

"We always thought he'd be around forever, even though we knew he couldn't be. We just never thought it would be this soon," said David.

"There is a saying that it's not how many people you know when you are alive as how many remember you when you are gone. I think daddy's going to be remembered for a long time to come," he said.

When Harry sought a restricted American Medical remedy for his cancerous condition in Greece a few weeks before his death, the physicians there rated him their "star patient."

"The doctor said daddy had made the best improvement of any patient he had up to that time," said David. "It was felt that the cancer had advanced to the degree that the treatment would not be effective, but the doctor said he would try it for a few days to see if there were any improvements. With the scale he used, it showed the best improvement of anyone at that particular time that he had ever treated, so he continued the treatment." he said.

"While daddy was in Greece having the treatment, Jenny awoke one night to find daddy gone from his bed. She later found out he had been restless and was down in the hotel lobby talking and drinking coffee with the hotel clerk. That's just the manner I feel describes daddy. He was able to get along with people everywhere," remembered his son.

Perhaps one of Harry's favorite biblical scriptures in 2 Timothy 4:7 sums it all up best:

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course,
I have kept the faith."

And like the large banner flying over neighboring Columbia County's Courthouse proclaimed last Monday, "We'll miss you Harry!"

**Corbett and
Sadie
Yarborough
1978 (l to r):
Hazel, Edward,
Esther, Beulah,
Nina, James,
Delta Jean and
Wayne**



**Corbett and
Sadie Thrift
Yarborough**



**In Cuba with friends (l to r):
Will and Ida Mae Knabb,
son Wayne
and Sadie and Corbett
Yarborough**

Corbett Yarbrough/Yarborough

"After Daddy's funeral we stopped back by my granddaddy Pink Raulerson's place and I wondered what we would do. I was out under a shelter and the question came to my mind, just what would we do to live now with Daddy gone. You see, I was 11 years old, but I said, 'Mother will make it, and I'll help her. We'll try'. And we did."



Corbett Yarbrough

Corbett Yarborough

When Corbett Yarborough was eulogized in 1984, at the Macclenny Church of God, the minister likened the virtues he possessed to the greatest man who has ever lived on earth, Jesus Christ. It was a fitting tribute to those who knew him, however it is not how Corbett Yarbrough would have described himself. Far from it, even though his motto, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you", just happened to be his creed. He lived by it religiously. It was permanently

stamped on his business stationary and it was indelibly stamped on his heart. He instilled it in his children and grandchildren.

A good and honorable name was so important to him that once, when a man by the same name had a bad debt and Corbett kept getting his overdue bills, he changed the spelling of his name by adding an "O" to distinguish him from the bad debtor. That change came before his last child was born. Eight of his children's birth certificates bear the spelling Yarbrough, but the birth certificate of his last child, Wayne, differs. It is spelled Yarborough. All because of the importance and regard of a good name.



Dennis David Yarbrough 1875-1899
Lillie Raulerson born 1881

It was August 22, 1900 that Corbett was born to Dennis and Lillie Raulerson Yarbrough on a little farm near Baxter that belonged to his maternal grandfather William 'Pink' Raulerson. He was called 'Sugar Toes' the first seven years of his

life until one day his uncle Noah and cousin Werth came riding up on a mule.

"Dennis, have you named that boy yet?" Noah wanted to know. "No, not yet," replied Dennis. "Well, I got just the name for him," replied Noah. "You can name him James Corbett after the world champion fighter."

And so, from that time forward he was called James Corbett Yarbrough in honor of the world heavyweight boxing champion, James John Corbett (1866-1933), who won the title in 1892.

Werth Yarbrough was the son of Dennis Yarbrough's brother John. He too was to play an important role in Corbett's life. Werth was four years older than his first cousin but their relationship connected early. Werth had been blind since birth, but pity didn't bond the two. Werth was intelligent, resourceful, enterprising, and a loyal friend to Corbett. The two needed each other. He lived with Corbett and his family for more than half a century.

Dennis Yarbrough homesteaded some land next to his father in law, Pink Raulerson, about three and a half miles south of Baxter on the Florida side. Corbett walked the country mile to a one room log school house where his teacher was Frances Foreaker. Later another school was built on his grandfather's property, known as Sparkman Branch. He was educated from the Blue Back speller. He was good in arithmetic, but hated English until he was out of school, he said. Another teacher was Swadie Fish, sister to Drew.

Dennis Yarbrough would die young, leaving his family \$1,400 in debt.

"My Daddy was a hard worker," Corbett said of his father. "He had been hurt when a horse he was riding threw him and crippled him up. He didn't live long after that, and he had rheumatism.

"After Daddy's funeral we stopped back by my granDaddy Pink Raulerson's place and I wondered what we would do. I was out under a shelter and the question came to my mind, just what would we do to live now with Daddy gone. You see, I was 11 years old, but I said 'Mother will make it, and I'll help her. We'll try'. And we did.

"We did do the best we could after Daddy died. Even though I was only 11 years old, I'd go to the fields to work and get knocked down



Corbett Yarborough, Staten, Lillie holding John, Viola (Doll) and Dennis Jr. 'Dink'

many a time plowing them roots. That old plow would hit a root and it would come back at me.

"My Mama died young too," he continued. "Daddy died November 11, 1911 at the age of 36 and Mama on November 4, 1919 at the age of 38. I'll never forget because I cut the date on a sapplin while sitting on a rail fence. I made the monument up there where we were living on the old Greally place."

Corbett said he vividly remembered the last trip he ever took with his Daddy.

"We hitched up the mule and buggy and went over to St. George. He had to stay over there so the doctor could check up on him. It was such cold weather that I noticed my Daddy had frost on

his mustache and I remember thinking that he was a fine looking man. Daddy wanted somebody to take him so I went. He knew that old mule would bring me back home."

He pauses. The memory was obviously painful.

"So much comes to my mind right here that I can't tell you," he says with clear emotion, "but anyway I did come back home alone.

"When I got home I put the mule up, and I believe Lee Fish and almost all those Fish boys were working for dad at the time. We never did have to pay one of 'em over 12 dollars a month with room and board and their clothes washed. I remember one night Lee came home a drinking and laid his clothes across Mama's feather barrel and his pocket book fell out and was lost. When Mother made her next feather mattress she found Lee's pocket book."

Corbett remembers how his Daddy and his uncles George and James Raulerson butchered cows almost weekly to make extra money.

"Daddy saved up enough money to pay for our homestead," said Corbett. "And besides paying for our homestead, he saved up over \$700 and put it in the Barnett National Bank. Then the bank froze all the money and when they released it, they gave Daddy gold instead. He took it and bought the Greally place and a pair of mules. It was 160 acres and when we added it to our homestead property we had 320 acres. One of the old mules that came with the place was black and the laziest thing you've ever seen. Her name was Mitt, and she was hard of hearing. The other one was 'ole Harry' and he got killed by lightening.

"We moved into the log cabin on the Greally place before it was sealed. It must have been about a 12x24 log cabin and the kitchen was added later. I can still remember when that kitchen was built. They used 1x12 pine boards, one inch thick, built up and down. Mama cooked in a fireplace that had a clay hearth long before they got the kitchen built," he said. "And that was some real good groceries back then. I liked anything my Mama cooked. My parents made some of the best sausages. Before dad died, we'd come in from the field working and get us a hunk of sausage and a sweet potato and that would be our supper. That was real good eating.

"Then we added a 6 x 18 foot porch with a water pump and shelf. The kitchen was about 12x18 with one window and it was on

the west end with two doors. One was on the north and one on the south. It was a box house with very rough lumber.

"Dad usually went to town once a week to sell the meat, and he would always bring me home a mess of chewing gum. I couldn't have been but about three or four and while Daddy was gone I begged Mama to give me a chew of tobacco while I was waiting on dad to bring my chewing gum. She said, 'Son, I can't give you a chew of that tobacco unless your dad says you can have it. Mama chewed tobacco and used snuff, she was a feign about it. She'd walk three or four miles to Moniac to get a box of snuff or a chaw of brown mule tobacco. So when dad came in she said, 'Dennis, the boy (that's what she called me, 'the boy') has been a wantin' a chaw of that tobacco all morning because you didn't come back fast enough with his chewing gum. Daddy said, 'Well, did you give him any?', and Mama said, 'I told him I couldn't unless you came in and said he could have it'. Daddy said, 'Well, go ahead and give it to him, he's got to learn', so I got me that chaw of tobacco and started chewing it as big as anybody. I started getting so sick I couldn't stand it. There was an open porch on the south end of the house and I went there and started vomiting. It liked to killed me. So that was my tobacco experience."

Money was scarce for the family, but Corbett said his Mother sold eggs, 'and I suspect sometimes a chicken to buy her snuff and tobacco'. he noted.

Times were hard and deep in a national depression.

"It was hard for us to even get a chicken to eat unless it was an old tough one." he said.

"I started sleeping with my Daddy two or three months before he died." he said. "What caused me to be sleeping with him was that I had a dream or a vision of my life one night. I was laying there pondering that dream and wondering what in the world it meant. I wasn't quite 11 years old yet, and I was laying there all by myself. I remember that the sheet had a hole in it and I was trying to wrap up in it when something fell in the room on the west side of the house. It sounded like a big sack of flour. That thing scared me so bad. I heard my dad open the door on the east side of the house and go out and as soon as he came back in I said, 'Dad, I want to sleep with you', and he said,

'alright, son'. Dad had heard it too, but he never commented on it again, but I slept with him until he died."

"Mama kept the farm after Daddy died. We had to give 'Ole Mitt' to Doctor Vinson to pay on Daddy's bill and I believe he gave us credit for \$75 dollars for him. It didn't settle the whole bill. Me and my Mother started building cow pens to make money. We dug the holes. She was a hard worker.

"I remember when each of my brothers were born. There was Dennis, Staten and John. Doll was next to me but I don't remember when she was born. I was called sugar and she was called Doll. I don't know where she later got the name Viola from."

Two years after Dennis Yarbrough died, Lillie married Hugh Brown.

"He was a fine old gentleman," said Corbett. "A kind feller and I loved him. He was called Bud. He'd been married before."

Werth, a few years older than Corbett, came to live with him while he was in his teens. He had been sent by his parents, John and Martha Raulerson Yarbrough, to a school for the blind in Atlanta, Georgia. According to Corbett, his first cousin, though blind since birth, could do as much as a sighted man.

"I hadn't yet married when I went up to Georgia to get Werth to come live with us," he said. "I hadn't even started going with girls. I never had but three sweethearts and I married two of 'em. I didn't want to play around with anybody unless I thought alot of 'em so Werth stayed with me unless his Mother had to have him, then he'd go home."

Corbett said he joined the church about 1917 while living in Baxter.

"Mother didn't have to worry about me, because I was the type of boy that Mother and the rest of them could trust." he said.

"Werth and I stayed right in the home with Mother and Bud until I got married." he remarked.

Corbett didn't say how he met Lovey Malenda Crews, the daughter of Thomas C. and Mary Electra 'Triss' Sapp Crews, except to say they belonged to the same church. When he asked for her hand in marriage, her spirited and ofttimes blunt spoken Mother shouted,

'Corbett Yarborough, you get out of here or I'll take a piece of stove wood to you'. However, the couple received permission and was married on June 13, 1918 in Macclenny by Judge Rhoden. He was 17, she was 16.

"I was broke and didn't have no money when I got married," he continued. "Mother gave me a feather bed and Lovey's Mother gave her a feather bed, so we had two beds and we made us a grass mattress. We moved to the Greally place where Mary Esther was born on April 24, 1919. I remember I had been plowing corn all day. I was glad Mother got to see her first grandchild because she died later that year on November the 4th.



**Lovey
Yarborough**

"Lillie Louie Dean was born at the Greally place too, and that's where I remember eating lots of grits and gravy. Everyone use to talk about how I loved 'em and to me that was a good meal. Honey, you know where that grits come from. I borrowed five rounds of corn from my Daddy-in-law to feed the mules and to have on hand to make our cornbread and grits. And that's what we lived on until we made a crop. And we didn't have much more then. Finally, it got to where I had to find work somewhere to make some money. I was able to get a job with the railroad. It was three miles to get there and three miles to get back. I'd walk to work in the morning and if I could I'd catch a ride back, but most of the time I had to walk. We had to dig grass with a hoe and I would give out, I just couldn't do it. I worked with Stanley, Otis and Lush Gainey and I remember Otis married Ida Mae Raulerson about this time. Finally, I had to quit the railroad. I just gave out and I was only 17 years old. But that was hard work. Next I got a job with Knabb and Raulerson, dipping turpentine and weeding around pine trees to keep them from burning. See, you could work doing that and if you gave out you could sit down. But on the railroad you best not set down. That job was a cat of a different color.

"I did get a job later with the railroad up in Fargo, but I worked in the coal car and putting water in the Tender." he said. A son, Edward Leroy, and a daughter, Hazel Bernice, were born to the couple when they lived in Fargo, Georgia.

"I had joined the church of God in Baxter, but they turned me out while I lived in Fargo for non attendance which was considered disloyalty," he said. "I had a couple, brother Dan Raulerson and Sister Lovey, his wife, come from Moniac to see me. They ate dinner with us, and they acted like they were just visiting. They didn't ask us about our spiritual condition. I don't know that they even offered to pray for us, though he might have because he was pretty religious. I was told by them that I had been excluded from the church for not attending. I explained to 'em that I had to work on Sundays, but it didn't seem to make no difference to 'em. I guess I was excluded, I never did hear anything more about it. I never did feel guilty because a lot of people had to work on Sunday. That's all they had on me to turn me out. I never got into trouble in the church but once after that and that is because I called a man a liar, because he lied. And someone didn't like that," he said.

Corbett, Lovey and Werth joined the Macclenny Church of God after their arrival in Macclenny.

Corbett remembered a special time when his wife needed a hat and had no money to buy one. She applied for credit with the local store keeper, Berry Raulerson.

"Berry had some old hats up there but he wouldn't sell her one on credit," said Corbett. "She would never have said anything about it, she was the best woman you ever seen in your life, but she needed one badly and we knew it. I sold the chickens off my yard to Lush Gainey, a man who knew my predicament. I took the money and I believe I bought the hat from Charlie Hodge, not Berry Raulerson, who was Aunt Caroline's brother. He's buried over there in North Prong almost in a ditch," he declared.

When Corbett and Lovey moved to Fargo in 1921 they first lived in a railroad section house. Then Corbett started hauling cross ties for D.C. Mobley on contract. They rented a house to live in for for \$3 a month.

Corbett had become a self taught mechanic and soon quit his cross tie business to work for A.L. Sermans in a garage.

"One day a man drove up in a Model T coupe," said Corbett. "He had a doctor's case with him. He told me he was on his way to help

someone with asthma, and I told him I had a little girl sick with it, and I'd like for him to check her when he passed back through. On his return he stopped and took a look at Louie Dean. He said he didn't have what she needed with him at the time, but he told me he'd send it to me by mail and he did. It didn't cost no more than two dollars, and you know what? It cured that youngin' and she ain't never had no more of it. She was about three or four years old at the time."

Corbett said he began to long for Baker County. He moved back and rented the Barnes Place in Macclenny.

"Now I had seen all of this about my life in that vision that I had in that back bedroom when I was nearly scared to death before my Daddy died." said Corbett.

Werth lived with him and Lovey and he was eager to learn the mechanic trade in spite of his blindness. The two men opened up a garage in a building they rented from Mr. Lucious Knabb for \$2 a month and went to work.

"That's when Werth really began to learn," said Corbett. "He could tear down an automobile, tightened rods, bearings, and most anything anyone else could do.

"I was also working at Knabb Motors on commission," continued Corbett. "It was really tough because I had to wait until the people paid their bill before I got my commission. James Fraser was my manager. I sold 31 Fords in one month working day and night. Mr. Fraser got to thinking I was making too much money, so he put me on a straight salary of \$30 a week and expenses. Then Werth had to leave when his Mother got sick. When he came back to live with us, after she died, Lovey was ill with a fever. I had been up to Fargo one day selling cars to the people I knew up there and someone told me to get some of that there 666 medicine for her. So I did. When I got home that afternoon all four of the little children were out playing. Me and Lovey set on the doorstep and she said, 'Corbett, you are going to have to tend to those children because they just won't mind me'. Ofcourse they weren't big enough to care much about minding. We had a pretty garden with corn, watermelons and stuff, and while I walked out there to look at it, Lovey cooked supper. I can't remember whether Lovey ate or not, but after I ate we laid down for a while

afterward. It was getting kind of late, and I was so tired, and had gone in the front room and laid down on the couch to rest some. Lovey came in later and set in the rocking chair and dropped off to sleep. I got up and said, 'Why don't you go to bed honey', and she said, 'Well I just hadn't', so I said, 'Well we might as well go to bed'. Lovey laid down with Hazel on the bed in the back. I went in to talk with Werth and I laid there a while and couldn't go to sleep. I had two or three thoughts that went through me, I hadn't ought to, but I couldn't help it. I wondered what I'd do if she was to die. "Finally I dropped off to sleep and not too long after that Hazel woke me up crying. I called out to 'Sister', that's what I called Lovey because when we married we both belonged to the church. She didn't answer, and Werth said, 'Well maybe she went outside'. So I went to her room to check and found her there. I laid my hands on her, and she was cold. I called out to Werth, 'Werth, the poor thing is dead', and he said, 'no, sure not', and I said 'yes, she is'. I lit the aladdin lamp and Werth got up and came in, and I told him I needed to run get Mrs. Lee Crawford. When I told her she said, 'Sure not', and I said, 'Mrs. Crawford, it looks that way, and I'd like for you to come with me'. So they called the doctor and I got a hold of my brother Dennis, I forgot now how I did because it was about one or two in the morning. I remember that Uncle Billy Matthews bought a copper casket to put her away in. He was a fine man. We had her a nice dress and Lee Crawford supervised all that. They wanted her buried where her folks were buried and I said, 'that's exactly where we'll bury her. Right afterward I remember Lovey's Mother saying, 'Corbett's too young to be without a woman'.

After Lovie's death in 1926, Corbett said, "I believe if anyone is in heaven it's Lovie because she was a good woman, I guess too good for me."

With Lovey gone Corbett didn't have too many choices. He had to have someone help him with the children and he had to make a living. That meant moving to Gainesville where the four children could be taken care of by Lovey's sister, Hulda (Mrs. Walter Crews). Corbett operated White's service station near by so he could be near the children. He wrote Werth and told him he was ready for him to come live

with him again and he received a letter from Werth by return mail saying he was ready to come. Corbett immediately went for him.

"He was a big help to me at the station," said Corbett. "I wasn't able to pay much board for the children, but I paid what I could." he said.

When he could find the time, he would return home to Baker County and visit with his family and friends. It was on one of these occasions that his car ran hot and he stopped at a well of water located at the home of Moses 'Mode' Thrift. Weary travelers were known to often stop by the well located near the main road to drink and water their horses. On occasion hospitable Mode Thrift would open his house for overnight guests and is said to have often fed the weary travelers as well as their horses. When Corbett stopped for water that day he met Sadie Mae, Mode's daughter, at the well. The 17 year old beauty stole his heart, and he returned time and again to court her.

Corbett was persistent. He sought the favor of Sadie's brother Russie and finally won her Mother's approval before setting out to find her father. He located Mode Thrift at a Macclenny garage operated by Lynn Barnes, brother-in-law of Sadie. Mode mentioned that he wanted to go to the courthouse because court was being held, and Corbett seized the opportunity to take him and ask for his daughter's hand in marriage, that very day! Mode surprisingly gave his permission because, he said, 'I feel like Sadie will be taken good care of'.

Corbett made arrangements to meet Mode back at the courthouse with Sadie, her Mother and brother. He explained to Mode that they would need him to sign the license. But when they arrived, Mode had disappeared and was no where to be found. However the four of them were able to convince the Judge that they did have Mr. Thrift's approval and Russie was allowed to sign for the license. Corbett took his new bride to Gainesville. It was April 12, 1928.

Corbett was ten years Sadie's senior, and he had four children, but Sadie didn't mind. The day she went to meet his children she carried with her a little sewing basket. She called each of the children to her side.

"I remember she had each of us a gift," said Edward "Bear" Yarbrough. "Mine was a little knife and I don't remember what she had

everyone else. But can you imagine someone so young being that thoughtful? And we always thought she was wonderful.”

On April 17, 1928, less than a week after her daughter married, Laura Thrift mailed her daughter a letter addressed to 119 South Evans Street, in Gainesville. It read: “Dear Sadie, I received your letter today.

Sure was glad to hear that you all was well. This leaves me and Hudson sick. Your papa came home last night all right. I don't know just when I can come. Just as quickly as I get a chance. I am glad you are happy. I am not. I wrote you a letter and mailed it Sunday evening. Well, Sadie I am glad you and the kids gets along good. I want you to be good to



(L to r): Sadie Thrift Yarborough, Mose and Laura Hunter Thrift holding Hudson Thrift, Russie Thrift. Standing in rear Effie Thrift Barnes

them. I will come just as soon as I get a chance to. Your papa sure got mad. Well, I will close and rite more next time. You rite me often. Your papa went to see them cows and Erbert sister wouldn't let him have them for no less than \$15 dollars a head. Signed: From Mother.

Laura Thrift wrote her daughter again two days later, on April 19th. A two cents postage stamp delivered the letter to 119 S.E. Van St., Gainesville. “Dear Saddle, I will answer your welcome letter. Sure was glad to hear from you again. This leaves me feeling no better. I don't guess I every will be well again. I have ben to your grandma and got some greens to set out. I guess maby he will try to do some better now. He has been so good to me since he has come back. You know he want quarel at me. He said he get so mad now that he could dye yet but he don't say anything out of the way to me. Russie and Annie May stayed with me the night he went home. Russie thought he might fuss at me. But I told him that he wouldn't say nothing to me he was

so glad when he found out I wasn't mad with him. He said he sure had a good wife. I asked him if he had just found it out and he said no he always know it, so I think you children just the same for your kindness. I will stay with him if he stays at home. He want bother me. I am my on boss. I will go to see you when I get the chance. I am at Lyns now. I come to stay with the kids to night. I will try to bring you a ham when I come so I will close." From Mama

On May 8 Laura Thrift wrote again to the Evans Street address. Dear Saddle, I will rite you a few lines to let hear from all of us. They are all well, but you know I am not. My feet and legs are swell so bad I can hardly stand. Well Saddle I guess you look for some of us to day but it is so far. Me and Effie is coming before long if I don't have to give up. I was sick last night and still sick this morning. I feel like I am going to have another spell. Well Saddle we have exchanged places with Russie. He lives at home and we are at his house. I try to help them in the store all I can. He has quit the garage. They pay me \$1.00 a night and that is all we make at the store three nights a week. Well I have got to cook dinner. Effie has to come over here. She has sold her stove and order one but it hasen't come yet so she has to cook over here. If I don't get to where I can go me and her will come in a few days and stay all night with you. So rite soon to me Sadie. Mama

Corbett and Sadie's first child, Beulah, arrived in Gainesville and not long after her birth the couple moved back to Baker County with their growing family. Corbett returned to work at Knabb Motor Company, which was still managed by James Fraser.

Corbett continues his story.

"Mr. Fraser wanted me to come back and work with him which I did. We moved into the Dykes house and stayed there for a while before moving to the old Walter Mobley place on the corner of 5th street. James, Delta and Nina were born there." he said. "I was still working for Knabb, but times got so bad again that he had to let me go, so I went down and worked for Allen Crews until they couldn't make it. So I asked him if I could work so many days a week, and I went back to Knabb Motors a few days a week, on commission. After a while things picked up and I went back to Knabb on full Commission."

Corbett tried his hand at a little of every thing. By this time his son, Edward, fondly called 'Bear' was beginning to learn the mechanic trade.

"Mr. Will T. Knabb, had a fleet of trucks and I always kept them in good running order," he said.

"I borrowed \$50 from Ira Walker to make a down payment on a truck and I went to hauling clay out yonder at Taylor to make some extra money. There were several of us hauling clay and if my truck broke down, I had me a chain and I'd take my truck and haul it in and fix it that night and take it back the next day. I started to lose the truck so I started hauling cross ties, and stumping and we had 40 head working for us at one time."

Corbett operated an ice house, and also opened a garage with his brother-in-law, Lynn Barnes, who had married Sadie's sister Effie. It was located next to the town post office on Railroad Street.

"Instead of us going half or 50-50 we did our own work and had our own parts and things like that. Of course we'd sell to one another on a discount or what ever we paid for it. We worked togeth-



Inside Garage Business 1935

(L to R): Edward L. 'Bear' Yarbrough, Elmer Barnes, Claude Stokes and Corbett Yarborough

er and got along fine and at that time, Edward was getting big enough to work and he worked with us some. Elmer worked some too. I quit Knabb Motors and worked there full time." he said.

Corbett added appliances and furniture to his booming business. When the post office vacated and relocated on Main Street, Corbett acquired the space so that Sadie and her friend, Sarah Lee Dugger, could open an upholstery shop.

"It made good money," he remembered proudly. Corbett eventually built a nice two and a half story block building on the corner of Railroad and College Streets. It was known as the Yarborough Building.

In 1937 Corbett built his family a new home.

"Daddy bought some railroad section houses in Baxter that contained fine novelty siding and tongue and groove lumber," remembered Beulah. "With it he built us a nice six bedroom two story home located on the north side of town one block from where we lived in the Walter Mobley house. That's where Wayne was born in 1944," she said.

At the time of Wayne's birth, Doctor P.A. Brinson knew the Yarborough family well. When he was summoned to their home to deliver a baby he thought it was a mistake and instead went to the near-by home of Roy Yarbrough whose wife was expecting. Finding that no one at the Roy Yarbrough home had phoned, he made his way on to Corbett and Sadie's house.

"He was shocked to find out that Mama was going to have a baby," said Beulah. "She had kept it a secret from everyone but Daddy, Louie Dean and her best friend Sara Lee Dugger. Everyone in town was surprised to find out that Mama had a new baby. No one even suspected she was pregnant." she said.

"Mama had kept her pregnancy a secret because her sister, Effie, had kept her pregnancy a secret from her and it was Mama's way of getting even with her." laughed Beulah.

"That was hard for Daddy because he never kept secrets. He liked telling things that would make people happy, but he kept that secret well." she said.

Corbett Yarborough readily admitted he felt some regrets regarding his life.

"I'll tell you what," he began. "I've regretted it so many times because I had to work so hard that I couldn't be with my children more when they were being brought up. Sometimes I was working up to 2 a.m. in the mornings."

Corbett attended the Macclenny Church of God regularly and took his children along with him. For some reason Sadie did not attend, yet she supported her husband and helped the children dress and accompany their father.

"Oh, she might go on special occasions or on holidays like Easter or Christmas," said her daughter Delta Jean. "But after her heart attack in 1970, she started going regularly," she said.

"If she went she would usually fall asleep," laughed Beulah.

"And Daddy would usually invite the preacher and his family home with us and Mama would cook for everyone," said Beulah.

"Every Sunday we always had company," said Delta. "We always had about three tables full and everyone got fed before the youngins' got to eat."

Sadie joined the Church of God during a revival preached by the Rev. T.L. Lowrey, remembered her family. The revival was conducted on the lot off State Road 121 behind the Yarborough home. As Sadie would later tell everyone, she was barely able physically to make it down the saw dust trail to the altar to surrender her life to Christ. From that day forward she was a dedicated member of the church.

The children enjoy recalling things they remember about their siblings.

"One thing special I remember about our sister Louie Dean," said Nina, "she was afraid of bad weather



Standing (l to r): Gertrude Cowart (Lovey's niece), Louie Dean, Esther, Sadie, Corbett and James. Seated: Delta Jean, Hazel, Nina, and Beulah

and she would put us under the tables or anywhere she could get us during a storm.” she said with a big laugh.

They particularly remember the day their brother James was critically burned in an accident while watching his brother Bear work on a car.

“It was in 1939 when James was nine years old.” said Bear. “We had gone over to Jacksonville and bought a burnt car with a good motor. After we got the car out here I was going to crank it up and check the engine out before I pulled the engine out of the body. It had a straight switch, which is two wires you wire together, and the two wires sparked and caught a can of gasoline that had turned over on fire. James started to run, but I caught hold of him and rolled him in a near-by mud puddle. He was sick a long time from that burn.” said Bear.

“James never complained,” said Beulah, “and he stayed in and out of hospitals for years. He always made the best of everything, he was truly the best thing in the world. James was fun to be around. Most people never knew how much pain he was in until the day he died when he was 58 years old,” she said.

“It cost Daddy a lot of money for James’s treatment,” continued Beulah. “James’s leg never completely healed and he suffered the rest of his life with it,” she said.

“And if there was a way to make money that was honest, I remember that our brother James would do it,” said Delta. “There was a cattle guard near our house which was located on a dirt road. James noticed that many people traveled the road with their horse and buggy so he’d go out there and open the gate that was next to the cattle guard for ‘em . They’d give him a nickel or a dime for it.” she said.

“James called it a toll road when he started making money,” said Nina. “He was probably the first person to invent a toll, but he really had an eye for making money,” she said, agreeing with her siblings.

“Daddy worked hard and about the only time we saw him was when he carried us to church on Sunday,” said Beulah. “There were so many youngin’s he had to make a living for us.”



**J. C. Yarborough business
Present day Railroad and College Street**

"And there was hardly a year of my life that I can't remember somebody living with us," said Delta.

"Daddy found time to take care of the widows and orphans too," said Beulah. "He believed in doing unto others as you would have others do unto

you," she said. "He believed so in the Golden Rule that he started his business with that as his creed. He had it on rulers, yard sticks, and so on. And when people came in and needed something and didn't have the money Daddy would say, 'those kids have got to eat, so he would make sure they got what they needed.'" she said.

"If Daddy sold you something it was insured by himself. He made up his own batteries during the war because you couldn't get supplies to sell and if something went bad, he made it good." said his son "Bear".

Everyone remembers the night the big fire destroyed a downtown city block, that is all except Corbett's business.

"Daddy said that's because he paid his fire insurance," laughed Nina. "Daddy faithfully paid his tithing," she said.

"I remember him telling me when the city block burned all but our building, 'Son that's what happens when you pay your tithing'."

"You know how we sounded the fire alarms back then?" he asked. "Everyone got out and started shooting their guns! The neighbors were the fire department back then." he said. "They would come help put out the fire."

"Daddy would never work on Sunday, and as good as Mama loved to fish she wouldn't fish on Sunday." said Delta Jean. "She loved to visit me and Adrian in Okechobee and often fished after dark on Lake Okechobee. But just before midnight Mama would put

her fishing pole away."

"Mama always told us the devil would get us if we fished on Sunday," said Nina.

"Back in those days when a person told you something you could believe it, but you cannot do that today," said "Bear".

The Yarbrough children were allowed to walk into town from their home in north Macclenny on Saturday afternoons.

"Daddy would give us a little money to go to the movie which always had a serial," said Beulah. "We could stay at the movie almost all afternoon. And I remember we always ate out on Saturday." she said noting it would usually be at Mrs. Sally Green's downtown restaurant or the Hotel Annie. And oh, how I remember those wonderful U.C. Herndon hamburgers." she laughed.

In those days, most Macclenny businesses were closed a half day on Thursdays.

"Mama would load all of us youngins' up and take off to the river to fish in the morning and Daddy and Uncle Lynn would join us when they closed up at noon. Mama was famous for her fish fries. Sometimes we'd go to a swimming hole to swim during the summer and then Mama would cook chicken and rice in a big old iron wash pot out on the river banks. Usually Aunt Effie (Barnes) and her sons Elgin and Elmer, Aunt Mary Ann Green and her daughter Alphie would be there too. They all lived across the street from us and so did Mama's best friend Sara Lee Dugger," said Beulah. "All of the cousins grew up playing together."

Corbett Yarborough's children remember him as stern and firm, but fair.

"I didn't mind the whippings, but I did mind the praying." remembered Beulah. "First he'd talk to you, then he'd pray with you, and then he'd whip you. I hated the talking and praying, much more than I did the whipping." she said.

"I hated to whip, but there are times you have to," Corbett once said. "Seemed like all my children appreciated every whipping I ever gave them. I've got the best family in all the world, everyone of them. They are a blessing." he said. "I just hate I had to work so hard and be gone so much from them."

"Mama could beat the devil out of you with a dog fennel and I deserved everyone I got," said Nina.

The Yarborough family had the first radio and television set in Macclenny.

"Daddy would take the television and put it in the window of our store and everyone would set there and watch Howdy Doody," said Earlene, Corbett's granddaughter who is the same age as her uncle Wayne. "We thought it was the greatest thing in the world. Me and Wayne use to crawl under the table and get a thrill watching the test pattern." she said.

Earlene is the daughter of Louie Dean and Erle Griffis. Louie Dean died June 16, 1951 after giving birth to a little girl that also died. Her husband Erle died December 3, 1961.

"I'd been shifted around my whole life, so it was a real home life when I went to live with my grandparents when I was 13 years old." said Earlene. "I had a wonderful life with them. They sent me off to college with a blank check and a bank book without a balance. I think he trusted me because I was as tight as he was," she laughed. "All the students at college couldn't believe I was writing checks in a bank book without a balance."

"We could never tell it all or what great influences they were on our lives," said "Bear" with great emotion.

"Each of us miss them in our own way," said Delta. "I've lived in Okeechobee for many years and Mama and her friend Alice Butler traditionally came every February to fish for speckled perch. The last February she lived, my husband Adrian (Chesser) called her and said, 'Miss Sadie, if you don't feel like driving down here I'll come get you', and Mama told him she wasn't able. She told him, 'if I am going to die I wouldn't mind dying right out there on that lake fishing'. She died a few days after that," Delta said, emotion cracking her voice. Since her Mother's death, she has lost Adrian as well.

Time must move on, the Yarboroughs know that. They are a strong breed of people who have been seeped in grief as well as happy memories.

Corbett Yarborough once said the greatest tragedy in his life was the loss of his daughter, Louie Dean, who died from an over-

dose of ether administered to her during child birth. She was buried with her infant daughter, Deborah Louiedean, who had been affected by the ether and died a short time after delivery. Louie Dean's obituary, published in The Baker County Press, June 22, 1951 read in part: The entire community was deeply shocked Saturday morning June 16th, at the announcement of the sudden death of Mrs. Erle L. Griffis, in a Jacksonville hospital where she was taken by her husband late Friday night. Mrs. Griffis was a devout member of the Macclenny Church of God, past-president of the Macclenny B & P W Club and had been employed for a number of years as chief clerk of the Baker County Health Department. Mrs. Griffis was known to all of us as an ideal Mother, wife and business woman. It was our family's privilege (Tate Powell, Sr.) to have been close friends to this good woman and to appreciate her many and excellent good qualities and character. She was as ideal a woman as you will ever be fortunate enough to know and we all loved her and will miss her. Louie Dean was only 30 years of age—but God called her to her early reward for reasons beyond our comprehension. We will all miss her deeply and in looking at her earthly home, expect to see her going about her household duties—none of which were ever neglected."

Earlene once penned the following emotional response to the tragedy in her life. "God must have known what lay ahead for the Yarborough family, for just seven short years later (meaning her birth), my Mother died in childbirth and my sister with her. Under normal circumstances I would have been denied a Mother and a sister or brother, but when I was twelve years old I came to live with granddaddy and grandma Yarborough. I didn't get just a second Mother and father, but a brother, too. (speaking of Wayne). I just hope and pray that if I die before I get my children reared, that I will have someone as unselfish as Grandma Yarborough to be their second Mother." signed Earlene Griffis Loadholtz.

Speaking of his grandfather Corbett, a grandson, Ken Sands, once said, "My grandfather has been the greatest influence in my life so far as things pertaining to goodness and righteousness are concerned. He has always had a spirit of goodness and honesty

about him that has made him, in my eyes, a man among men. He has set an example for all men to follow. I cannot express in words how much I love and respect him. He has been the best living example that I have ever had. He has been my best friend by expressing to me the kind of love that defines the word love. He has taught me to earn my way by working hard, to be honest in all my dealings and to have love and compassion for my fellowman. Above all else that he has taught me, he has taught me by example to live the life that Christ would have us to live. I could never repay him for all that he has done for me. The closest I can come to repaying him is to live the life that Christ would have me to live. This would mean the most to him I'm sure. If I become half the man that he is I will be a great man for he is the greatest. I thank the Lord that I was blessed to be his grandson and I pray that I may never do anything to shame him or his name."

Once when describing his Mother, Wayne Yarborough expressed. "I have shared my Mother with a lot of different people, but I always have felt she and I were as close as any Mother and son could be. If there has ever been a woman worthy of being called Mother, I believe my Mother has. She has been a Mother to the blind, a Mother to an orphan, a Mother to the wayward, and someday she will be a Mother in Israel."

Daughter Delta Jean (Chesser) once wrote about her Mother: The home I remember from my childhood days, is a home that was magic in so many ways, built and sustained by a family's love, as lasting and warm as the sun up above, furnished by sympathy, kindness and more, with friendship that welcomed each guest at the door—surrounded by meadows of laughter and joy, with a garden of memories that time can't destroy. And looking back now, as my memories bloom, I know that the magic that filled every room, came straight from the heart and the hands, of no other than you, my devoted and wonderful Mother."

Granddaughter Raye Sands Lindsey, daughter of Beulah, wrote: When I was a child my Grandma was my idea of the perfect person. She was everything a little girl could love and admire. I remember many happy moments with my Grandma, but the fond-

est memories are those of the two of us just being at Grandma's house, cleaning, cooking, and doing other tasks that Grandma's do. I can remember doing household chores by her side, mocking every move she made and hanging on to every word she uttered. I even repeated her many times saying, 'Anything worth doing is worth doing good'. I was constantly with my Grandma during the day and most of the night. We went to the grocery store together, to 'Miss Sippies', so Grandma could get her hair done, fishing, church activities, Lions Club and other places her various interest took her, and you can bet that if there was a way, I was there too! From this constant state of following Grandma all around town, I received a nickname from my Grandma and some of her friends and for many years I was called my Grandma's 'Shadow', and that is one nickname I am proud to display. A few years have passed since the time of my adventures with my Grandma, but one thing remains very prevalent, and that is the admiration and love that I hold so dear for my Grandma. She is a source of great inspiration to me, and she has done more for me than could ever be repaid in a lifetime, but knowing my Grandma as I do, she does not do for other people so that she will feel that she has to be rewarded for it, she does things because it is her nature. She is indeed in my opinion a perfect person. And all my love goes with her where ever she may go.

Corbett and Sadie successfully operated Yarborough Furniture and Appliance for many years. He eventually formed Yarborough Gas Company and upon retirement in 1961 they sold it to their three sons.

"After we all left home to start our own families and establish our own homes we returned back to their home often," said Bear. "It was always a place of love and refuge where we were always welcome."

What greater legacy can a family have than that of the Golden Rule.

NOTE: Sadie Mae preceded her husband in death on February 4, 1983. Part of this interview was made with Corbett Yarborough before his death on the 16th of August 1984.

Personal family record:

APPLICATION FOR LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION from estate of T.C. Crews, petitioner Mary E. crews, county of Baker, that T.C. Crews of Baker County Florida died intestate on the 10th day of July 1928, leaving heirs and legal representatives surviving, Mary E. Crews, J.H. Crews, Magnolia Mixon, Hulda Crews, Mollie Raulerson, Willie Mae Cowart, James Crews, William Crews, Morris Crews, Esther Yarborough, Louie Dean Yarborough, Ed Yarborough, Hazel Yarborough, minor heirs of Lovey Yarborough of Baker County Florida.

A Portrait Of The Fraser Family Thomas Jefferson Fraser/Emily Burris (Burroughs)

No one knows why Thomas Jefferson Fraser and his wife Emily Burris (Burroughs) came to Baker County, Florida, from South Carolina in the late 1840's, but their posterity became a long line of community and state leaders in Florida.

The first official record of Thomas and Emily is on the 1860 New River County census. New River became Baker in 1861. Thomas was 65 years old and his wife 50 at the time. Their first nine children were born in South Carolina and the last four children in Florida. The couple, who married Aug 18, 1831 in South Carolina, were parents of William, Mary, John, Harriet, Martha, Samuel, Georgia Ann, James



**Home of Clemon Cogdell Fraser 1847-1930;
wife Betty Fraser 1856-1925; with daughter
Mary 1886-1929**

Madison, Clemon Cogdell, Sarah, Francis, Amanda and Brantly Harrison.

Thomas's father was Mordecai of Marlboro County, South Carolina. Besides Thomas, he had a son named Lewis. Thomas's son, Clemon Fraser, married Lewis's daughter, Bettie Fraser. After their marriage, the first cousins moved to Florida and their son, James, and his wife Lizzie Howard, became the parents of Baker County's State Senator Edwin Fraser. Lewis was married first to Mary Ann (Pollie) Covington, daughter of Col. John William Covington. His second marriage was on Nov 5, 1846, to Letilla Caulk. They are buried in the

now-deserted Fraser Cemetery, outside Bennettsville in Marlboro County, S.C..

The family story says that Thomas Jefferson, while living on the north prong of the St. Mary's River, was visiting Lake City on business when he was shot and killed after an argument with a livery stable owner. No record of this 1860 event has been found. He is said to have been buried in Columbia County by his wife Emily, who was with him when he was killed, but no record has been located to prove this.

Emily returned to South Carolina while some of her grown children remained in Florida. She is said to have died there in 1864, but no record of her living in Marlboro County has been located, or her burial



First known residence of Fraser Family in Baker County. Located near Cedar Creek. Home of Thomas Jefferson Fraser, his son Brantly Harrison Fraser, and the Honeymoon home of Brantly's son, Thomas Brantly Fraser and his bride "Rosie" Roberts Fraser. Still standing in 1995

place. Her youngest son, Brantly Harrison, married Maranda Bowyer in Marlboro County on October 29, 1876, and moved back to Sanderson after the birth of their first child, Elizabeth, who was born July 30, 1877. His posterity became a long line of Baker County merchants. His and Maranda's children were: Elizabeth Helen,

Emily Katherine, Martha Bell, Daisy Maynard, Thomas Brantly, Hattie O., Lewis Calvin, Adelene, Clemon Cogdell and Leon Burroughs.

While the Civil War raged and preparations were being made at Ocean Pond for Florida's first big battle, Brantly Harrison said he would straddle a cypress fence in Sanderson and watch the soldiers march by. Many of the wounded men who lay moaning and dying in the line of sniper fire near the Thomas and Emily Fraser farm on Cedar Creek were brought to the Fraser home and either nursed back to health or tended until they died. They were buried on the Fraser property and, in



Edith Fraser Blair and her brother State Senator, Edwin Fraser - 1978

Clemon Cogdell and Bettie Fraser, first settled in Newberry (Alachua) County, Florida, where he married Lizzie Howard on September 24, 1902. The couple had nine children.

Later he moved to Baker County and worked for the local Ford Dealership before starting the Southern States Nursery in south Macclenny in 1933. That profession began a long line of Fraser nurserymen in the county, passing to son Edwin, then to Edwin's son Gary and from Gary to his son Ryan.

James and Lizzie's daughter, Edith, married Claude Blair and they owned Blair's Nursery. The Blair's only child, Gerra Lee, married Ray Gatlin and they own Ray's Nursery south of Sanderson. James and Lizzie's children were: James Ernon, Lizzie Eugenia, Aubrey, Aline, Edith Mae, Mildred Lila, Edwin, Bettie Christine and Howard.

Their daughter Mildred, born Jan 19, 1913, in Newberry, said that in the early '20's, her family moved to Hawthorne where "we resided on a farm near my grandparents. In 1923 or 24, my daddy decided to move to Baker

later years, the Fraser's daughter, Amanda (Williams), received a pension from the State of Florida for her service.

The Fraser family remained so closely linked with their South Carolina family that for more than 120 years they faithfully traveled back and forth to attend family reunions and other special occasions.

James Brantly Fraser, one of 16 children born to first-cousins



James 'Jim' Fraser and wife Lizzie Howard. Jim is son of Clemon Cogdell Fraser

County and we settled in Sanderson for about two years, when he decided to move to Macclenny. Leaving my grandparents in Hawthorne upset me very much. We visited them quite often. We would get out of bed at three or four o'clock on Sunday morning to go to Hawthorne in an old Model 'T' to visit them. Back then the roads were not paved and the trips began to get longer and rougher. "My grandmother Bettie passed away on Dec 18, 1925, leaving my grandfather and an aunt who we always referred to as 'Little Mary'. She was handicapped. I never remember my parents complaining. Granddaddy had difficulty trying to get a foot wash until the grandchildren came along. Any of us would wash both feet for only a nickel, which bought a lot of suckers

in those days. My daddy died in 1958 and my mother in 1957 at the age of 79 and they are buried in Woodlawn Cemetery," she said.

Lizzie Howard



1957 Fraser Family Reunion. Home of Clem Fraser, South Macclenny

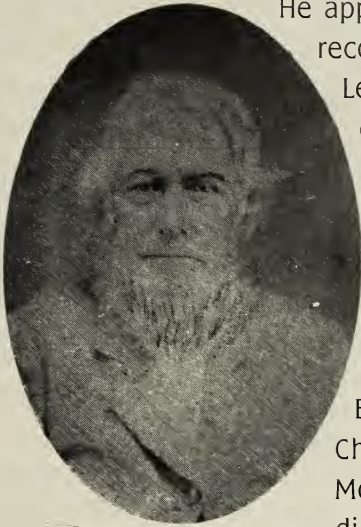
Fraser was the daughter of the late Judge Mott Howard, once a county judge of Baker County, and Sarah Raulerson Howard.

Brantly Harrison Fraser, youngest son of Thomas, was a grocery merchant in Sanderson, as were his sons, Thomas Brantly and Clemon Cogdell. Thomas passed his business to his son, Thomas (Tommie), who passed it to his son, Al, of Glen St. Mary. Brantly's daughter, Emma (Burnsed), ran a general merchandise store in Sanderson as did her daughter, Mamie Burnsed Rogers.



Thomas Jefferson Fraser, son of Mordecai

MORDECAI FRASER of Marlboro County, S.C., has no known official record linking him to his two sons, Thomas and Lewis.



**Lewis Fraser, son OF
Mordecai**

He appeared on the Marlboro County census records from 1800 through 1840. His son, Lewis, and family appeared as his next door neighbor in 1840. Lewis appeared on the census records until 1880. Records of land transactions for Mordecai are recorded in the Marlboro County Courthouse and reveal that his wife's name was Mary. A land transaction in 1866 to Lewis Fraser from T.C. Bristow was witnessed by Mordecai and Charles Fraser. This would indicate Mordecai was alive in 1866 although he did not appear on the Marlboro County census after 1840. His only known children, according to family members, are Thomas and Lewis.

Most census records and Marlboro County land transactions pertaining to this family spelled the present-day usage of Fraser as Frashier/Frazier/Frasher. On the 1880 census, Lewis states that his father, Mordecai, was born in North Carolina. Mordecai is reportedly the Scottish immigrant of this Fraser Clan, according to his grandson, Brantly, who used the Scottish pronunciation of certain words. Clemon Fraser and his wife, Bettie, were living as neighbors to Lewis in 1880 and all listed farming as their occupation.

In 1950, Edwin Fraser made a trip to Marlboro County and took a picture of the Mordecai Fraser homestead. It is not known where Mordecai is buried; however, near the homestead was located a Fraser Family Cemetery with Lewis (1808-1887); first wife, Mary



**Marlboro County home of Mordecai
Fraser, father of Thomas and Lewis**

Ann Covington, no dates, and second wife, Lotilla Caulk (1824–1895). Markers were there for the children of Lewis and Lotilla -- Ann Eliza (Aug 16, 1847–Sept 16, 1855), Clarissa (Dec 30, 1848–Sept 16, 1855), Elizabeth (June 14, 1853–Sept 2, 1853), Daniel 1857– 1857, and Lewis Ellen, (April 6, 1859–March 21, 1860). Others in the cemetery were children of C.C. and Bettie Fraser -- C. Colquitt (no dates); Infant (Aug. 20, 1878–Aug 31, 1879) and infant daughter (Oct 18, 1877–Oct 18, 1877); Thomas C. Herndon (June 16, 1884–June 21, 1886), son of J.S. and M.C. The cemetery is located on Highway 9 to Clio, left at State Routes 35 to 349, three miles on right.



La Viece Moore Smallwood at the long deserted FRASER FAMILY CEMETERY located in woods on top of a hill at edge of a field, about 300 feet from county road 349. Found in 1975 by La Viece and Vince Smallwood

During research on this family, a Brantly Harrison Frasier was located in a book on Quakers of North Carolina. His age would have been about the age of Mordecai's father, but no further information could be found to pursue the inquiry.

THE FAMILY OF THOMAS JEFFERSON FRASER

THOMAS JEFFERSON FRASER, son of Mordecai, was born in 1802 in South Carolina, married Emily Burroughs in 1831 and died in 1860 in Columbia County Florida. His home was located on Cedar Creek in north Baker County. The following is known of his and Emily's children:

WILLIAM -- Born June 24, 1832 and died April 4, 1886. He married Catherine, daughter of John and Sallie McDaniel McColl. They are the parents of Mary Annie, Sallie, John, Lucy and Alma. They are buried in Hebron Cemetery in Marlboro County S.C. The McColl's were Scottish settlers.

MARY -- Found listed in the family Bible of her brother, James Madison Fraser, as born in Nov. 23, 1833 and died Sept 24, 1862. No

other known record or information exists.

JOHN — Born June 14, 1835, settled in Columbia County. He married Mary Raulerson. He died Oct 24, 1862.

HARRIET was born May 4, 1837, She married William Mekler and died at age 25 on Sept 14, 1862.

MARTHA was born Dec 3, 1838, and was living at home with her parents on the 1860 census of Baker County. Martha was known to take care of Confederate soldiers during the war. Once she took a horse and wagon to



JAMES MADISON FRASER FAMILY (l to r): Jessie Ursery and husband Lewis Fraser, Clifford Hunter (Alma Fraser's daughter, Sara Fraser Etheridge, Cary (both children of Lizzie) Henry Hansell (Mellisa Fraser's son) Melissa, Henry Cribbs, Olin Fraser's husband Harney, Will, John and tom Fraser. Seated: Edna and Alma Fraser (twins), Elizabeth Crews (2nd. wife) George Ann Berry Fraser, dau of Thomas Jefferson Fraser. Olin Fraser Cribbs, Lilly Burney Harney's wife, Emma Alderman, Rob's wife, and Rob Fraser. Children Seated: Milton Fraser, Mildred, Olin and Henry's daughter, Maida, Harney and Lilly's daughter Pauline, in lap, Lillie Mae and Ruth children of Rob - 1913. Family in black, mourning death of James Madison Fraser.

pick up a wounded soldier by the Glen St. Mary River. She was known as a very religious person, but when the Union troops tried to stop her and capture the soldier, Martha is said to have used language that caused the Union to retreat. She took the wounded soldier home, but he died later. The Fraser family buried him in their yard on their farm. Before dying, the soldier, whose last name was Collins, told them how to contact his family, who lived in Lake City. Three months after his death, the soldier's father came by horse and wagon to retrieve his son's body. The trip home, on the rugged back roads in the cold and rain took its toll on the soldier's father

and he died of pneumonia a few days after returning home with his son's body. Martha never married and died Nov 1, 1873.

SAMUEL born April 18, 1840, settled in Ocala, Marion County, and was the father of two sons, Clemon Carrol and Samuel Jordan. He married Mary Corina White (1871– 1925) and died in Ocala 1938.

JAMES MADISON became a Florida state senator. He married Frances M. Silcox of Palatka on 15 June 1871 and they had 13 children, all born in West Tocoj, Clay County Florida: Melissa, Thomas Henry, James William, Alma Texas, Edna Kansas (twins), Harney, Robert, Clemon Crill, Jessie, Lewis, Blanche, Olin, and John C.. After Frances Marion Silcox died on Dec 7, 1890, he married Lizzie Crews daughter of Harley and Sarah McCall Crews. They had three children: Sarah Irene (Etheridge), Carey Donald and Milton McBride and an infant named Mignott. James Madison died Feb 21, 1913, and Lizzie who was born June 23, 1873 died Jan 9, 1940.

GEORGIA ANN was born Oct 1, 1845. She married Levi Berry, Dec 3, 1883 and died August 24, 1924.

CLEMON COGDELL born June 9, 1847 in Marion, S.C., married his first cousin, Bettie, daughter of Lewis Fraser, son of Mordecai, on March 28, 1869. They were the parents of 16 children: Samuel Elias, Sarah, Lewis Thomas, Margaretta Eugenia, James Brantly, Infant Daughter, Clemon Cogdell, William, Letilla, John, Lila Crosland, Mary E., Martha A., Infant son, Annie J., and Sidney C. Clemon brought his family to Florida in a horse and wagon and died in Alachua County, Oct 8, 1930. He and Bettie are buried in Woodlawn Cemetery in south Macclenny.

SARAH was listed on the 1860 New River County census as 10 years old and having been born in Florida. Bible records of James Madison record her birth as April 12, 1847, and her death, Nov 18, 1862.

FRANCES -- born Feb 1, 1851 in Florida (Bible record March 2 1853), nothing else is known of her, except she appears on the 1860 New River census as eight years old.

AMANDA -- family record shows birth, Feb 29, 1849 (Bible record 28 Feb, 1854), in Florida, married John C. Williams, son of

Jackson and Rebecca Sweat Williams. Their nine children were: Mamie, Georgia, John, Dora, Samuel, Willie, James, Jessie and Laura, all born Sanderson. Mamie married Henry Jackson Dugger and they became parents of Baker County School Superintendent Lonnie Dugger, who helped to reconstruct the educational system in Baker County during the late 1950's (See Volume III Once Upon a Lifetime) Also State Senator Johnnie Dugger and Blanche Ruis, wife of Arlie, long-time Citizen's Bank officer. Johnnie's son, Jack Dugger, married Loyce Knabb and they are parents of Bobby Dugger (died 1994), and grandparents of Jane Dugger Rhoden and Carolyn Dugger McCollum.

Blanche Dugger Ruis said that John and Amanda's daughter, Georgie, complained of leg pains when she was about 10 years old and stopped walking. Amanda rubbed all kinds of homemade ointments on her child's legs, but they didn't improve. In later years, she regained some use of her legs and used a small chair to hold on to as she pushed it around for support when she walked. Today, the chair is in the possession of Blanche (Ruis), who is a grandchild of Amanda. Amanda died Jan 30, 1938 at the age of 84 years.

FAMILY OF BRANTLY HARRISON FRASER, SON OF THOMAS AND EMILY FRASER

BRANTLY HARRISON FRASER, born May 2, 1856 in Florida, moved to South Carolina with his mother after his father was killed in Lake City. He married in 1876, at age 21, Maranda Bowyer and moved back to Sanderson in 1877 with first child, Elizabeth. After the death of Amanda, Sept 7, 1912, he married Mollie Wilson/Newburn widow of J.W. Godwin. He conducted various



Home in Sanderson: Maranda (Bowyer) and Brantly Fraser with three of their sons - Clem, Lewis and Leon

sings in the county, and had a nice voice, as did his father, Thomas Fraser. Brantly's son, Clemon, also had a nice voice and, according to his daughter, Dorothy Williams, was a man of many talents.

Additional genealogical records of this family are on file, and are obtainable in the Family History Center of Salt Lake City, Utah, and its branches throughout the U.S. A compilation of Fraser family genealogy and additional stories are available through the Baker County Historical Society in Macclenny.

STORIES FROM THE Brantly HARRISON FRASER/ MARANDA BOWYER FAMILY

Brantly HARRISON FRASER died in his sleep at the age of 85 years at his home in Sanderson, Monday morning at 11 o'clock on November 3, 1941. According to his obituary, "he had been in very feeble health for some time, but was able to be up early Monday morning. He decided to lay down and when his wife Mollie went to check on him, he was taking his last breath." The obituary said, "the end for him was peaceful.....just as he had lived his entire life." It was further stated, "Mr. Fraser was one of the few we had whose word was his bond." He was buried in the family plot in



**Brantly Harrison Fraser and
wife Maranda Bowyer Fraser**

Manntown Cemetery south of Glen St. Mary, November 4th.

After farming on Cedar Creek on the Skeels Place, later called Fraser Place, he became interested in the mercantile business. He was a member of the School Board from his district for two terms, but never aspired to any other political office.

He often talked about the Battle of Olustee. He said he had been to the mill with an old Negro that morning with a mule and cart. They saw the soldiers passing and decided to go home. Seated on the rail fence at his home, he said he watched the soldiers coming by all day. He could hear the roar of the cannons and rifles, the battle cries of the soldiers and other noises of war that made a lasting impression that he never forgot.

He pronounced his words similar to those from Scotland, said to be where his father or grandfather came from. He would say, "thou" for "you," for example. He used his talent for singing and taught singing classes at the conventions held around the county. His brothers and sisters formed singing groups and sang together.

Because of a heat stroke, Brantly often went barefoot, and kept a pan of water handy to soak his feet in, as he could not perspire. In 1931, he wrote the following letter to the State Welfare Board, Jacksonville, Florida 1.

"Dear Sir: I was 80 years when I signed up for the pension, very hard of hearing. Totally unable to work. Have not perspired on my right side for 54 years and no where in 35 years. Have give away money, but would swear, with both hands up, if necessary, that I have never give away one dollar to get a pension. I have no record of what I've given away. I have been a member of the F & A M Lodge for about 30 years at Sanderson. I will give you reference in Jacksonville as to my reliability and paying my debts. Hagen and Peters and Co., Morrison and Co, Cudaha and Co. M.C. Kaiser, Atlanta, Ga. When I signed up for a pension I was too deaf to understand what the law was, B.H. Fraser.

Note: Return letter from the Board stated, "You will still receive your \$14 a month and hope that this assurance will quiet your fears."

Brantly's granddaughter, Mattie Dobson Roberts, said about her grandfather. "We'd see him coming and we would know to run and get the foot tub and fill it with water. He would roll up his pants legs and stick his feet in the tub and pretty soon he'd be cooled off."

Brantly's grandson, Tommie Fraser of Sanderson, remembers that his grandfather's children would often come to borrow money



Brantly Harrison Fraser - Front porch at Sanderson - victim of heat stroke

from him when they were in great need, with no possible way of paying it back. In order for his grandfather to keep the inheritance records straight, he would take the same amount of money "loaned," and disperse the exact same amount to his other children. "It was in the Hoover Days called the Great Depression," said Tommie. "Back then \$1 looked like a wagon wheel, money was so scarce. Grandpa liked to keep the score even and that was the way he kept an equal score."

The granddaughter of Maranda Bowyer Fraser, Eunice Dobson Burnett, daughter of Daisy, told the story of the day Brantly's wife Maranda died. "The date was September 7, 1912, on a Saturday late in the afternoon. She and Grandpa had come to Sanderson that morning and visited their daughter, Adelene (Addie) Mann. Our family, George and Daisy Fraser Dobson and my brothers and sisters, had come to visit them for the week-end. When we arrived, they were not home, but they arrived soon after.

"Grandpa and Papa went out in the field and picked some peas for supper. Also, they dug some new sweet potatoes. When they came back to the house, Mama, Papa, and Grandpa started shelling the peas. Grandma went to the kitchen, made a fire in the cook stove and began getting things ready to start cooking. Papa saw her through the kitchen window where she was sitting on a chair and he could tell that something was wrong with her. He said to Mama, 'Daisy, there is something wrong with your Ma'. Then all three of them rushed to see about her. I remember seeing her with Grandpa holding her on one side and Papa holding to her on the other side. She seemed to be dragging her feet. They placed her onto a bed but she could not speak. A Doctor Brooks, who lived at Sanderson, I think, went out to see her and said she had suffered an apoplexy which was the breaking or blocking of a blood vessel in the brain. She lived about three or four hours. I think she was buried on September 9, 1912. I was five years old on that day."

I remember one occasion with my great grandfather, Brantly Harrison Fraser. I was about four years old, sitting on a bench at my grandpa Tom Fraser's grocery store on Highway 90 in Sanderson. Great Grandpa Brantly walked up and started shelling me some pecans he

carried in his pockets. I have always referred to him as "Pecan Grandpa." I remember when he died and the family gathered at the little house north of the railroad tracks. Everyone was bustling around visiting and working in the kitchen. I do not remember attending the funeral.

ELIZABETH HELEN FRASER, born July 30, 1877, married Francis Marion Berry June 13, 1894. The couple had six children. She died Feb 28, 1920, and is buried in Manntown Cemetery.

EMILY KATHERINE FRASER, born April 4, 1879, married George W. Burnsed Sept 20, 1896, and for many years lived on the Main Street of Sanderson. The couple had three children: William, Mamie Mae and Otis. Em, as she was called ran a general merchandise store there for many years. The last days of her life, she was an invalid, cared for by her daughter, Mamie Rodgers. Her bed was placed in the front room of her Highway 90 home and she could watch the people come and go to the local post office across the street, and talk with townspeople as they walked by or visited from her front porch. She died Jan 5, 1957, and is buried in Manntown Cemetery.

MARTHA BELL FRASER, born Oct 2, 1880, was married to John Berry in 1896. The couple had three children: Ralph, Mamie and Thelma. Mamie, born in 1903, died in 1904. In October 1906, Martha Bell travelled by train from Jacksonville with her two surviving children to visit her family. While there she and the children were stricken with a fever. Ralph died Oct 12, Martha Ann Oct 19, and Thelma Oct 24. They are all buried in Manntown Cemetery.

DAISY MAYNARD FRASER (1882–1964), the fourth child of Brantly and Maranda, is remembered by her daughter, Mattie (Stringer–Roberts), as a wonderful Christian woman who lived her religion and set an example for all. She married George Dobson and for many years the couple moved around every year to a different farm, sharecrop–farming. Her parents never owned a home while she was a child growing up, but later in his life, her father was in the grocery store business in Sanderson. "He owned property then," she said.

"Mama never did have much of an opportunity to go to school, but she was a very smart person and said she wanted to be a school teacher so much. She went to the fourth grade and never had many school books of her own and had to study with someone else. Parents in those days were very poor and did well to feed themselves and have a place to live. She encouraged her children to read."

Daisy married George Lacy Dobson from Lake Butler. She wrote him once and asked him not to come back to see her and he didn't, so she wrote him and asked him to come back and see her. She said her father never believed in long courtships, so they didn't see each other too long before they got married on August 24, 1904, and had nine children. George was a farmer and in the cross-tie business. Daisy was a devout Mormon, baptized in 1912, but George did not join until 1926. Their son, Joseph Dobson was presented the Service to Mankind Award by the Macclenny Sertoma club in 1987. He was a very benevolent person, along with his faithful companion, Homie, and served as Clerk of the Baker County Courts for 32 years. Her niece, Blanche, daughter of Thomas, said, "She was the kindest, sweetest, most understanding person I ever knew. I could tell her my troubles and she understood and always took time to listen and her advice was so great that it is still a part of my life and has helped me through my life."

THOMAS BRANTLY FRASER -- In a 1971 interview, my maternal grandfather, Thomas Brantly Fraser, gave me the following statements about his life.

"I was born September 16, 1883, in an old farm home north of Sanderson. My Pa and Ma already had four children -- my sisters Lizzy, Em, Mattie and Daisy. I was their first son, so I was given the name of Thomas for my Pa's Pa and the name Brantly after my Pa."

His first recollection of his life was when he was three years old and his little 15-month-old sister, Hattie, died. "It broke my mother's heart and I remember her stunned with grief, sitting on a log, crying."

Maranda Bowyer gave birth to Lewis Calvin, a daughter Adelene, and two more sons, Clemon Cogdell and Leon Burroughs. He

remembered the nights they were born and the many wagon trips he made with his Pa into Sanderson to shop for staples because the family grew and raised most of their food. His favorite memory of childhood is playing house with his sister, Daisy.

"We collected tin cans for the play house and spent many happy hours cooking food on an open fire in the cans," he said.

"Ma didn't can our food at first. She didn't have the things to can with, but she did have a pedal sewing machine and she made all of our clothes.

"When I was seven years old I started to school, about four miles north of Sanderson, and my first teacher was Charlie Dinkins. After I finished the sixth grade, I started working at the Glen St. Mary nursery as a grafter. I made 35 cents a day. Pa let me keep it and spend it like I wanted to.

"One of the most embarrassing times in my life was when I got older; Ma and Pa bought me my first suit. It was grey and it was the first pair of long pants I'd ever had. Most of us boys wore short knee pants known as knickers. I was ashamed to wear them, but I put them on and went to church anyway," he said.

Church was where most of the social activities occurred, where boy met girl and girl met boy. "I could show you within a hundred yards the first place I ever saw Rosie," he said. "She was only 14 at the time, but she caught my eye," he said of Rosanna LeNora Roberts, fondly called Rosie. "She was a beauty and as she got older her beauty and manner charmed the boys for miles."

Tom was tall, with a smooth, tan complexion -- and handsome -- and one of Baker County's most eligible bachelors. After a year of courting Rosie, either on foot or by horse and wagon, he asked her father, Enoch Nathaniel Roberts, for her hand in marriage, which was customary in those days. He kept the proposal private, and rented a house telling everyone his Aunt George Ann had rented it for a rooming house. He then ordered furniture for it from I.R. Rhoden in Macclenny a few days before the wedding.

"One of my old girl friends kept saying, 'Tom Fraser, we know you're going to marry that Roberts girl,' but I wouldn't admit to any such thing," he laughed.

The couple was married on the front porch of her parent's home, south of Sanderson near the South Prong of the river, on Wednesday evening, December 14, 1904, by T.C. Carroll. Many of the couple's friends and relatives attended.

Because the furniture he had ordered would not be delivered by Mr. Rhoden until the following Saturday, he said, "We crawled into a



Children of 'Tom' and 'Rosie' Fraser 1974 (l to r): Brantly, Enoch, Blanche (Moore), Maude (Jones) Tommie and Harold. Missing: Claude, Clem and Alton

buggy and left for my Pa's home about seven miles north of Sanderson and spent the first two nights there." He borrowed his father's horse and buggy to return to Rosie's parent's home

and the couple spent their third night there. On Saturday morning, they met Mr. Rhoden with their furniture and moved into their home. His Pa and brother, Lewis, came in another horse and wagon so they could take the borrowed team back home. Thus began 56 years of a happy marriage.

"Few people had horses in those days because of the expense," he said. "If a farmer was lucky he might have a mule. Most folks walked to the grocery store for supplies and the merchants delivered them a few days later," he explained. "Trails and roadways, now long overgrown with underbrush, made the distance to town shorter," he said.

Tom and Rosie moved to a little farm on Cedar Creek and that's where their first son was born, arriving between midnight and dawn, delivered by a midwife named Melviney Dinkins. His mother, Maranda, asked them to name their son Willie after her brother, but the next morning she announced she had found a prettier name, Harold.

By the time their next son, Brantly, was born the couple had prospered enough to buy a horse and wagon. They were still farming, but had moved again. Their first daughter, Maude, was born, delivered by Rosie's aunt, Margaret Green Hill, and named by her grandfather, Enoch Roberts. (Maude married Dana Jones from West Florida and produced the first grandchild for Tom and Rosie, Edsel, in 1929).

The little family struggled. It was during the Depression and Thomas told the story of how he would walk to Macclenny to buy groceries, crossing the St. Mary River on logs because there was no bridge. Later in the week, the grocery merchant would deliver his scant order to his home by horse and wagon.

Tom and Rosa were the parents of three children when a travelling photographer arrived in Baker County and offered Tom an opportunity to purchase his camera equipment. Tom traveled by horse and buggy all over the county making photographs of families, which he said made him lots of money. When he felt as though he had taken just about everyone's picture, he and Rosie moved to Jacksonville and rented a house on Dora Street. He joined his brothers, Clem and Lewis, working on a street car making 15 cents an hour. Clem was a conductor



Blanche Elizabeth Fraser with enough hose on crippled leg to make it look as large as the good leg. 17 years old - 1928

and Lewis and Tom were motormen. The job, he said, was okay unless the wind blew and it rained, because -- unlike the conductor -- the motormen were unprotected. He said this soon grew old and the echoes of home and his family lured him back home to Baker County.

They moved two miles south of Sanderson, where a daughter, Blanche, was delivered on April 17, 1911, by Rosie's aunt Margaret Green Hill. She had been born on the birthday of her mother, Rosie, -- April 17, 1887 -- and her great grandmother, Emily Roberts Greene -- April 17, 1854.

Blanche was visiting with her parents in the home of Annie Rigdon in the fall of 1913. According to her father, "She was running around playing with the other children while Rosie was helping to tend Annie, who was ill. Suddenly she came and crawled up in my lap. I said, 'This child is burning up with a fever,' and I told Rosie we needed to get her home. The following day we took her to Dr. Brooks in Sanderson and he tried treating her but it didn't seem to work. Later,

we took her to Jacksonville by train and by horse and buggy to Macclenny, Lake Butler and Starke, seeking medical aid, but little help was available to fight polio. That's what she had."

Despite desperate attempts to eliminate the possibility of handicap, the effects of the polio and fever could not be overcome and she was left with paralysis of the right leg and foot. She crawled or was carried in the arms of family members, or rode on the back of her father and brothers until she was a big girl. Then she began walking by pressing her right hand on her leg for support. Later in life she used a single crutch to support her affected leg, causing some members of the family to nickname her 'crip' for cripple. Still later she graduated to a brace for the leg and walked with that until 1987 when she entered a nursing facility where she spent the remainder of her life (Blanche's only son, 21-year-old William Thomas 'Billie' Moore was killed in an auto accident while home on leave from Japan in 1958).

Another son of Tom and Rosie, Enoch Nathaniel, named for Rosie's father, arrived in yet another home 12 miles south of Sanderson, delivered by Annie Rigdon. As a young lad, Enoch accidentally broke his hip at school and from that day forward walked with a limp. According to Bessie Rowe Fraser, wife of Tom's brother, Lewis, said in a 1972 interview that Enoch would most likely not have been left handicapped if the family had heeded the instructions of Dr. P.A. Brinson, but the family could not bear to see Enoch, or any of their children, suffer in pain, she said. While sitting up with him one night, his sister, Blanche, lifted the weights that held his body in traction when her brother begged her to lift them to ease the pain.

Enoch was a kind and gentle man who experienced a lonely death. His body, long stricken with raging pain, had deteriorated in strength badly and he continually took aspirins to ease the misery. He never wanted to be broke and had kept five \$20 bills -- he called it his emergency money -- hidden away among the pictures in his wallet for years, refusing to spend it. After his death, his only son Nathaniel, knowing about the money, found it missing when he examined his father's wallet. He offered the person he knew had taken the money a \$100 bill in exchange for the treasured five twenties to have as a keepsake of his father, but was unable to obtain the original money.

Nathaniel said his father always told him, "I'll never be broke." It was important to him, remembered his son. "He used to keep his wallet inside his pillow slip when he slept, pushing it all the way to the end, saying if anyone tried to get his wallet they would have to disturb his head to do it. He did that for as long as I can ever remember," said his son. "He was always peculiar about his wallet. He wouldn't even carry it in his back pocket, he always kept it in his front pants pocket. He treasured what ever was in it, papers, pictures, or money. I learned that from daddy. Even today I always keep my wallet in my front pants pocket, especially if I'm going to be in a crowd," said his son, who was 39 years old when his daddy died.

Two other sons, Claude and Clem, were born in yet another home, seven miles south of Sanderson. Claude's only child, a daughter named Barbara Ann, was killed at age 36 in a car/truck accident in 1975, and -- broken-hearted -- Claude died with a heart attack in 1978. Clem, his wife, Diane, and 11-year-old daughter, Marty, were killed in a tragic car/truck accident while on vacation in 1966. Another daughter, 12-year-old Judy, was injured in the accident. The couple's death orphaned five children. One of them was a child named Linda by his first wife, Nora Raines. Brantly's daughter, Imogene, lost her life in a car accident in 1952 at the age of 18. In the wake of the many accidents that took the lives of two of their children and four of their grandchildren, Tom and Rosie, were a great example of noble courage and faith.

As the couple reared their large family, they farmed. Rosie cooked on a wood stove, and did her ironing with heavy irons heated on the stove. Water was brought to the house in buckets from a well, and an outhouse was used for toilet facilities. Their food came from the garden or was raised on the farm. They had a milk cow and Rosie made butter from the cream. She canned vegetables from the garden, and fruit from the trees that grew on their property. Her pantry was always filled with jars of food. By the time another son, Alton Eugene, arrived in a home three miles south of Sanderson, the couple had saved enough money to buy a small grocery store on a curve of Highway 90 just west of Glen St. Mary. Dashing and good-looking Alton was the first of their children to die. He lost his life in a tragic car acci-

dent on Trail Ridge, just east of Macclenny, on November 22, 1947, when his son, Michael, was four, and daughter, Suzanne, one month.

The couple's last child, Thomas Jefferson, arrived at their combined grocery store/home just west of Glen. He was delivered by Dr. Will Brinson, assisted by Bess Rowe Fraser. Tom planted one cedar and two pecan trees in the front yard that are still there but the little grocery that once catered to the farmers, nurserymen and saw mill employees has vanished from the scene.

Tom and Rosie, their seven sons and two daughters, eventually settled in Sanderson where Tom ran a successful grocery store business. During the Great Depression, he had to turn his car in to pay debts because the farmers who charged their groceries

could not pay their bill. After the Depression, he returned to the grocery business in Sanderson and eventually sold his store to his son, Tommie. His son, Enoch, also ran a grocery store in Sanderson and later Glen St. Mary. Tom retired many years before his death. Rosie died in 1961 and in 1964, Tom married a widow, Bertie Mae Richardson, also from Sanderson, a kind and considerate woman his family loved.

Tom lived until 1974. When he died at the age of 91 he was growing a vegetable garden and had a small patch of cotton. He was only



**At home in Sanderson -
Maude Fraser Jones, Rosie
and Tom Fraser, and Enoch
Fraser, standing; Clem
'Red', Harold and Tommie
Fraser**



**Alton Fraser and wife Louise
Taylor Fraser**

ill for a few weeks when all organs began to shut down inside the once strong and healthy body. He was surrounded at Lake Shore Hospital by his children and grandchildren who kept a 24-hour vigil for days preceding his death. He was a true family patriarch, greatly loved and respected by all of his family. He was a member of the Dinkins New Congregational Methodist Church. He and Rosie are buried in Manntown Cemetery, south of Glen St. Mary, where his family erected a six-foot family tree monument in their honor.



**Suzanne and Michael,
children of Alton and
Louise Taylor**

After his death, his family was pleased to read a special letter in *The Baker County Press* from Martha Ann Barnes. Her letter stated that she wanted to take this opportunity to speak to the young people.

"I've lost a very dear friend today. Many of you knew him as Mr. Tom Fraser and some as Uncle Tom , but I wonder how many of you really knew who he was or what his life was all about and how it affected you. He gave us 91 years. His line of work may seem meager to you youngsters, after all, there's a grocery store on every corner now-a-days. He never was a Statesman, always felt the younger members of his family were better qualified. But the things he did were many times unseen. Depression days were hard on many of your families. There were times I know you folks felt you would never cover the bills. How could you keep the cow, if you couldn't feed her? Where would the seeds come from for a simple garden to feed your growing children? I guess that's where my friend came along. He never turned his back when your family needed so much and had so little. He shared the hard times with this county and held our spirits up, kept saying there was coming a better day. He gave confidence and hope when none could be seen. It's not what you see, it's what you believe, and because he cared, because he loved, there was a better day. I guess what I'm trying to say to you young folks is...don't think that a very old gentleman passed away and that's all. Please remember a part of our history has been laid to rest. In some cases, without his help, you could have possibly never come into existence. I write to you

young people because you see I'm young too. Your parents knew his deeds far better than I. But I knew the dear old gentleman and loved him dearly.

Martha Ann Barnes.

For decades, Tom and Rosie's children would gather on weekends at their home in Sanderson. He would always kill one of his big fat laying hens and it would be filled with golden eggs when she would dress it out to cook with rolled-out, tissue-thin dumplings, the best in the world. Somehow that one chicken would always go around to feed everyone. No part of the chicken was thrown away. Rosie snipped the chicken's beak and plucked out its eyes to even cook the head. She skinned the chicken's feet and boiled them, which was a favorite for the grandchildren. The adults ate first at the big dining table and the children were always served last or they ate in the kitchen.

After Rosie's death in 1961, Tom lived for awhile with his son, Tommie, and his wife, Lillian (Davis), in Sanderson and the family faithfully gathered to honor him annually on his birthday. He looked forward to their coming home for a covered-dish dinner celebration. Later, when he remarried they still gathered at his home annually in addition to the regular annual Fraser Family Reunion, a tradition for more than a century.

On his 88th birthday, he was presented a Book of Remembrance pertaining to his life, and his children and grandchildren included written memories and photos depicting their life with him. His wife, Bertie Mae, later reported that he spent almost every day on the front porch with his special book, reading and re-reading the memories of his family. He was reluctant to loan the book to anyone, fearing it would be lost or damaged. In part are a few excerpts:

His oldest son Harold wrote, "I remember back about 1916 and we were living at the old John Sapp Place and we had a Negro boy named Louie working for us. After he worked all day, he would let me, Brantly, and Maude hold to his coat tail and run around the house until dark. When you and Mama would go over to Grandpa Roberts' house at night, old Louie would lay down on his back on the floor and take

Enoch up on his stomach and make ugly faces and scare us to death, tell us he was going to eat Enoch. He made me and Brantly drunk one night before Christmas and he got drunk and hid in the cotton pile. Uncle Leon scratched him out and wore out a new buggy whip on him and old Louie put on all the clothes he had the next day and left and that was the end of old Louie (Harold married Mary Etta Fritz in 1934. Their children were: Luther Arnold, Clyde Monroe, Margaret Carol and Harold Gary, who died in 1988) .

His second oldest son, Brantly, wrote his dad, "Papa, we never told you, it was the year of 1917 on the old Sapp place. Do you remember the first watermelon was real large and you would not pick it? It disappeared and you thought an old man working in turpentine picked it. He later found the rinds by a log in the pond. The negro thought the boys dipping gum had picked it. He whipped them several times with a wide leather belt, but they never did admit to it. Harold and I had a time getting it over the fence, but when we did, we cut it and it was real ripe and good. We hid the rinds hoping the Negroes would be accused of it. We felt sorry for the boys but we knew not to tell you. This I will never forget, but we were afraid to tell you (Brantly married Gladys Cleo Combs in 1929 and their children were Mary Louise, Imogene (died 1952) and Thomas Edwin).

Maude wrote, "I remember once when I was a little girl about eight years old, we lived on a farm south of Sanderson. We didn't have a car. Christmas was near, I was too old to believe in Santa Claus, and was wondering where and how we were going to get our Christmas presents, but when Christmas came, Mama and Papa went to the train station, rode the train to Jacksonville, which was a very long ways then. They got all nine of us children a present. I remember mine so well, It was a little red lantern filled with candy. We all had a wonderful Christmas, all 11 of us just being together" (Maude married Dana Jones in 1928 and their children were: Edsel, Dwight, Carolyn (Adkins) and Wensel).

Blanche wrote, "You have always been a wonderful father, spared the rod and caused me to be a spoiled brat. You worked so hard trying to fit me with shoes that I might walk better, brought me on the train because there were no cars to Jacksonville to the doctor

and to the circus. They say I followed you everywhere you went until I was old enough to like boys. You bought me a horse to ride to school, then after the horse you took me personally because I was too important to ride the bus.” Blanche, who contracted polio at 18 months, was said to be spoiled by the family, especially her over-protective father (She married Carl Benjamin Moore in 1933 and they had a daughter, La Viece, and a son, William (Billy), who died in 1958). She spent her last days in Heritage Health Nursing Home in Macclenny, confined to a wheel chair.

Enoch wrote, “Just a line to remind you of some of the happiest moments of my life. Remember back in the year of 1926 when you and Aunt Daisy loaded all of us kids in your cars and took us to the State Fair in Jacksonville? You can imagine how thrilled we were. And I remember that same year you let us boys, Claude, Clem, Alton and me drive your Model-T Pick-up to South Prong Church” (Enoch married Hazel Rewis in 1943. They had one son, Enoch Nathaniel, Jr.).

Son Claude wrote, “Once upon a time when I was a little boy I carried the *Jacksonville Journal*. I saved my money and hid it between the quilts and one day Mama took it to Jacksonville and bought me, Clem and Alton all a lumberjacket for winter, and I got mad because they would not help me carry the paper. I should have had some money because I slipped into my father’s grocery store and got me some change to spend, so I owe it back to you today, I was 12 years old but I knew how to rob you and save mine (Claude married Vonceil Dobson in 1936. Their only child was Barbara Ann (Rhoden), who died in 1975).

Alton married Louise Taylor in 1941. Their children are Michael and Suzanne. Alton died in 1947. A letter appears in this sketch from him (He is also the father of Rex Frasier/Fraser, whose mother was Gladys Brown of Jacksonville).

Clem was married first to Nora Raines in 1945. They had one daughter, Linda (Meade). He married second in 1952 to Diane Weber (died 1966). They had Judith Ann, Martha Ann (died 1966), Lewis Clemon, Jr. and Richard Thomas. Diane had a son, Jackie, by a previous marriage. Clem died in 1966. A letter appears in this sketch.

Tommie wrote his daddy how surprised and shocked he was when he found out his dad had remarried. His dad was living with

him, and Tommie had no clue he was even dating. He wrote, "I was really very happy because I knew you were happy and I think that Bertie Mae has made you a wonderful wife. I feel sure that Mama would have said, 'OK' if she could have spoken. We all love you very much because of your honesty and truthfulness. You have never shamed a one of us." Tommie married Lillian Davis in 1947 and their children were: Judy (Long), Al, Cyndy (Ott), and Jeff.

Tom had 26 grandchildren and excerpts from a few were:

"I know that you can see the Fraser in this face and being your first grandchild, I guess you were kinda proud of me. I have always been very proud of my Grandpa. Love, Edsel (Jones).

From Mary Louise, Brantly's daughter: "I loved helping you in the grocery store. I probably was in the way more than I helped but whenever you had an order to fill I would run get you three cans of tomatoes, or a pound of coffee, etc. Your store was so different than the stores of today. I love you dearly."

Brantly's son Edwin wrote, "There is nothing I enjoyed more than sitting on the front porch with you, hearing you tell of the interesting things that happened in your lifetime, about the Fraser family moving to Florida from South Carolina, about the things Uncle Bodie Roberts did, about all the horse trading you have done, discussing politics and all the other things. I could sit for days and listen. I always enjoyed staying with you and listening to your record player. We lived at Taylor and didn't have one. I think I must have driven you nuts, because I heard you talking to Grandma one day toward the end of the week and you told her, 'That boy sure does like that record player. Brantly ought to buy him one'. When I was about five years old and you lived on a farm south of Pine Top, Tommie had me wash his back while he took a bath in the tin wash tub. He was going courtin' and said that he had to look his best. If I could have picked the world over for a Grandpa, the choice would have been simple. Grandpa, you are the most admirable man I have ever known."

From Alton's son, Michael: "To me you are a symbol of the Fraser family. Since I never really knew my dad, Alton, I always looked to you for memories of him. I appreciate the way you have always taken care of his grave."

From Suzanne, Alton's daughter: "I remember coming to see you every summer and would sit on the front porch and just talk. The people in the city just don't do that."

From Judy (Long), Tommie's daughter: "There was never nothing real big that you and I did together that stands out in my mind, but a lot of little things do. One thing is how you, Grandma, and I would go off on Sundays to church. After church, we would just ride, like over around Lawty, Starke and places like that and you would let me drive for you. We would go to all these old cemeteries and look at all of those old graves, and for lunch Grandma would always bring things such as cold biscuits, pork and beans and we would pull off the side of the road and eat on the grass. "

Tommie's son, Al, wrote: 'Words seem so empty when our hearts are so full. To me, you've always been someone to look up to and respect not only for the knowledge you have but for what you always stood for. There is nothing I'd rather do than sit around and hear you tell things that happened to you and all the family years ago. I think about all the times you took me and Judy to the wash hole when Mama and Daddy wouldn't. These things have meant a lot to me and now that I'm a little older, I realize just how precious you really are.' Al Fraser was elected Clerk of Baker County Courts in 1994.

There would never be enough words to express my love and respect for my grandfather. Tears come easily to my eyes when I think of all he meant to me while he lived, and all he means to me today. He was a great inspiration and when life got rough, I would almost immediately think back on him and the faith he always had in me. I owe him more than I could ever repay in words and deeds. Once, one of my young granddaughters said to me, 'I know who the best grandmother in all the world is.' I asked her, 'Who?' thinking she would say I was, to flatter me. Instead, she said, 'Your grandmother.' I said to her, 'Why do you say that, Tabitha? You didn't even know my grandmother.' Her reply was, 'I know it has to be that your grandmother is the best because you cry every time you talk about her.' What a tribute to my precious grandmother Rosie, the dark-eyed, dark-haired, vivacious beauty who died just as beautiful, though her hair had turned to silver. Yes, to me she was the best grandmother of all.

Excerpts from letters illustrate how times were for Tom and Rosie's children after they left home.

Tom and Rosie's son, Claude, wrote his sister, Blanche, from Wauchula, Florida, on March 8th, 1934, where he was staying with his mother's sister, Lula (Roberts), and her husband, Ed Sapp. It depicts the era:

Dearest Sis, I have just knocked off work, I mean I have put out today. But that is all in work, you know, but every day is not hard. I carry up berries for Uncle Ed and see that they pick them right. He pays me \$1.25 per day and board and washing and six days per week. You know that is good and I have such a good place to stay, it seems like home they are so good to me. I go to town on Sat. nite and cut a salty dog. We had a dance up here right by Uncle Ed's, up at Cejkay. They are two good-looking girls there. I have got me one of them. She is a Salty dog. I will send you her picture for you to keep for me until I go home. They are Bohemenian nationality, but they talk like Mildred and Rebecca Sparks. You know what I want is a good time. I have saved some money since I have been here. I am going to send some home Monday for Pa to put in the bank. Uncle Massey's Ula and Ruth, Myrtle were at the dance Sat night too. I danced every set but 2. We danced until 2 o'clock. Harold carried old Ula off for a stroll. You have me a good girl when I go home. When I go home I am going to pitch me a drunk. I think I can't drink this down here. I am going to get me a wrist watch. Maude owes me a letter. Well, I will close for I can't think of anything to write.

Your Brother, C.H. Fraser

From Belle Glade, Fl. Jan 1, 1940 Tom and Rosie's son Clem wrote his sister:

Dear Sis: This is all the paper I have so will write on it. I haven't worked but 2 days since Thur before Xmas. I'll sure be glad when we go to work. Celery is supposed to start Wed and I'm gonna work in it. I've borrowed till I owe \$6 already now. When we go to work I've gotta pay that and live and pay Pa Alton's \$5 and I'm gonna pay him some or all I can on that old debt I owe him. I mite get in the CC Camp most any day now and if I do I'm gonna pay everybody every cent I ever owed them. I want to get even with the world once more. I

don't know how much I owe Pa and Ma. I'm gonna pay them enough that I know I'm even with them, then I want to buy me plenty of clothes and save me some money and get started at something I can make something at. I'm not gonna be a heel of a bear's ass all my life (I hope). It nearly kills me to be so poor. I can't do what I want to do. I'd do anything for money as good as I like it and need it. Well I'd better close. Write soon and tell me all the news. Tell my gals hello and tell Tommie he better not beat my time to.

Clem Fraser

P.S. I went to a Square dance last nite. Otis Green, the boy I come down here with come, him and his wife. He's traded cars. Got him a Hudson."

Note: Clem Fraser married 1-Dean Brown, no children; 2-Nora Raimes, one child, Linda; 3-Diane Weber. They had four children: Judith Ann, Martha Ann, Lewis Clemon, Jr. and Richard Thomas. Clem (nick-named Red), his wife Diane and daughter Martha Ann were killed in a car accident in 1966.

In 1957, Tom and Rosa were travelling to Baldwin with Mamie Rodgers, Tom's niece, when a Pontiac driven by a Glen St. Mary man hit their car turning it over and throwing the threesome into a ditch filled with a foot of water. They were treated for shock and released. The accident happened in front of the home of Rannie (Fraser) and Theo Taylor, where they were to have celebrated a family birthday dinner. Tom and Rosa's grandsons-in law, Vince Smallwood and Ray Adkins, both Florida Highway Patrol Troopers were on the scene immediately and investigated the accident.

The majority of Tom and Rosie's children and grandchildren made their home in Baker County.

HATTIE O. was born April 22, 1885, and died July 19, 1886. She is buried in a lone grave in Cedar Creek Cemetery north of Sanderson. The family often referred to her as "Little Hattie."

LEWIS CALVIN FRASER, born June 1, 1888, married Bessie Edna Rowe, daughter of Asa William Rowe and Mary Leah Barber, 31 July 1920. He was a farmer and served in World War I. Bessie Rowe and her

family lived across the branch from Lewis, and Bessie was good friends with his sister, Lizzie, and the same age as his sister, Mattie. Quite often, he would visit the Rowe family. Although she had known him several years, they didn't go on dates. Sometimes, he would walk her home from Manntown Church and occasionally he would have a horse and buggy. The two got serious when Lewis came over one day to help Bessie's brother with the hay. When they decided they liked each other, Lewis proposed in February and they married July 31, 1920 in Jacksonville. Lewis's sister, Emma, and brother, Clem, were witnesses to the ceremony. Bessie chose not to tell her folks about her wedding plans. She said Frances Berry went over to her parents' home and told them after she and Lewis married. "Ma asked me why I didn't tell her, "Bessie once said in an interview, "and I told her I just didn't want to, I didn't want her to go to any trouble."

After their marriage, they lived with Lewis's parents, but within a year they moved to a farm. To begin housekeeping, Bess's mother

gave her a "bed, dresser and a wash stand, and Lewis had a bedstead and a moss mattress." They became the parents of seven children. Lois Clarine was delivered at home by Mrs. Wilson, the mother of Mollie, second wife of Brantly Harrison Fraser. Maranda Elizabeth was delivered by Mrs. Fannie Todd, Charles Edward and Sara Leah were delivered



**Grandchildren of 'Tom' and 'Rosie' Fraser:
Continue to hold reunions. Present in 1994*
Seated: Mary Louise Fraser Rhoden, Ed Jones,
Suzanne Fraser; Standing: Edwin Fraser, Cyndy
Fraser ott, Michael Fraser, La Viece Smallwood,
Arnold Fraser, Judy Fraser Long and Al Fraser
*Home of La Viece & Vince Smallwood**

by Dr. Will Brinson, Frances Fay was delivered by Teecee Givens of Margaretta, Emily Marion delivered by Dr. E.W. Crockett, and Carl Brantly by a Mrs. Brooker. Bessie said that most people used old sheets, sugar sacks or oil cloth to make diapers in those days.

Unlike many other serious-minded Fraser family members, jovial, fun-loving Lewis was known for his natural wit and candid sense of humor. "He was always going on with some kind of nonsense," Bessie once said of her husband.

Bessie assisted with the birth of LaViece Moore Smallwood, daughter of Blanche Fraser and Carl Moore and granddaughter of Tom and Rosa Fraser, at their farm home Feb 22, 1935. She once said it was her first experience assisting with a birth, but was not to be her last. Lewis died Aug 11, 1964 and Bess on June 6, 1976. They are buried in Mantown Cemetery.

ADELENE FRASER MANN, born Aug 22, 1890, was said by her daughter, Grace Mann Rhoden, to be a beautiful woman. Her brother, Tom, bought the lace for her wedding dress. She had six children from her marriage, Jan 22, 1908, to William Joseph Mann: Grace, Mabel (Ben), Elmer, George, Ruth and Bill. She died at the age of 28 years during a flu epidemic, when her last child, Bill, was ten days old. Grace remembers that her mother had dark black hair and eyes and wore her long hair on top of her head. She dressed her girls in clothes she made and put pretty ribbons in their hair. When her brother Clem went off to war, Adelene took his fork and wrapped it up after breakfast and kept it that way all during the war. She would always cry when she received a letter from him. She loved her family very much." Adelene died Oct 17, 1918.

CLEMON COGDELL FRASER, born in Feb 4, 1892 a son of Brantly and Maranda Fraser, was interviewed by me in 1972 at age 80 concerning his long and successful life. His first memory began, he said, when he was about four years old. Terror filled their home when a powerful and fierce storm struck the community. The family, he remembered, huddled together for safety, but were forced to flee under the house when the roof blew off taking two rounds of logs with it. Soaking wet

and filled with fright, they remained beneath the house until the storm was over. For the following few weeks, he said, until they could build a new house, the family lived in the kitchen which had been built separate from the main house.

He attended school until sixth grade and took a teacher's exam at age 16 and began teaching school for \$30 a month. After two terms, he quit, saying the profession "is just not for me." He and his two brothers went to Jacksonville to work on the street trolley for fifteen cents an hour. He missed Baker County and returned to farm with his parents. He took a job in the mercantile store of Lonnie Canova in Sanderson, later quit to work in turpentine, then a lumber company, later as a bookkeeper and eventually attended a barber college in Jacksonville and was a barber for awhile. Finally he joined the Army, enlisting in Jacksonville in 1917. He was sent to Savannah, then to Vermont. In 1919, he left for Europe on a White Star Liner and was stationed in France. His brother, Lewis, was drafted and also served in France, forty miles away, and they never had an opportunity to get together. When he was discharged, he took a job for the State Road Department.

Next he and his brother, Thomas, purchased their father's mercantile store in Sanderson. Tom sold out in a few months to Clem. By the time he was 29 years old, he owned the store and a furnished home next door, completely paid for. Clem saved his money and reinvested shrewdly. He refused to buy a car, travelling where he wanted to go by horse and buggy or on foot. Later, a salesman left his car at the store on weekends while he traveled by train to Jacksonville, where he lived until he returned on Mondays. In exchange for a place to park his car, he allowed Clem the use of it if he wanted.

Girls were not important to Clem until he saw Gladys Mann walk into his store one day. They married August 14, 1921. They purchased a car in 1922. Their first child, a son, lived only a few days after birth. They moved to Glen St. Mary and continued in the retail business. Pregnant with her second child and suffering from high blood pressure, Gladys roomed and boarded in Jacksonville with her sister until their son, Warren, arrived on Oct. 11, 1923. Special care bills totaled \$700, a mint in that day.

Next the family moved to Lake City, purchased a garage, then to High Springs to buy a "filling" station and garage. When Gladys became pregnant again, the couple moved to Jacksonville for her special care until their daughter, Dorothy, arrived on July 26, 1925. Clem took a job as a factory dealer

in whole-sale tires. Next, he built a store in Baldwin and re-entered the retail business. Their son, Berkley, was born on Dec 1, 1937. The family lived in Baldwin



1978 Fraser Family Reunion at Green's Creek

Front row in chair is Thomas 'Tom' Fraser, to his left his brother Clem Fraser, next to him is wife of their brother Leon, Onie, then Carolyn Jones Atkins, La Viece Moore Smallwood, Leslie Atkins, Suzanne Ridaught, her son, Michael, Wimpy Jones, and two on end Teri and Tami Smallwood. Standing in between Tom and Clem is Tom's daughter, Blanche, Clem's wife Eula Mae, Michael Fraser, Al and Charlotte Fraser, R.J. Ridaught, Gary Fraser, unkn and last Maude Jones to far left of photo is Edwin and Jackie Fraser.

for 15 years and two months. In 1940 he moved back to Baker County where he had bought a nursery in 1938. He worked in turpentine business until 1962. Except for a short stay in Jacksonville in 1953 to complete Berkley's education, they lived in Baker County. In 1959 Clem cut the cypress timber from his nursery property and built a modern home on south Fifth Street in Macclenny. He was a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day-Saints, a religion Gladys embraced when they married. He was active in civic organizations and was nominated for *Who's Who in America*. He was a Mason, Woodman of the World, Eastern Star, Foreign Aid and KKK. Gladys, the daughter of W.D. and Jane Mann, died Feb 21, 1965. He remarried Eula Mae Powers who died Oct 18, 1970.

LEON BURROUGHS FRASER was born Nov 16, 1894. He married Oney L Rigdon, daughter of Alex and Leta Roberts Rigdon, Nov 1, 1916,

in Sanderson. The couple farmed south of Sanderson for many years before moving to Jacksonville after he obtained work at a meat-packing and cold-storage house on West Beaver Street. The couple had six children, all born in Sanderson:

Irene, who married Morris Bell of Maxwell (their two children are Wilber and Marie (who married George W. Wilkinson of Baker County);

Ralph Herman, married, first, Ruby Rhoden of Baker County and the couple had a son, Gerald, who died at the age of two, and a daughter, Patsy. Ralph married, next, Mary Hagen. Their five children are Herbie, Ray, Gerald, and twins Shelia and Cindy. Marcella (Cellie) married Jack E. Lucas of Maxwell. The couple was killed along with their 12 year old daughter, Barbara Jean, in a car-train accident in the 1950s. They were survived by a daughter, Peggy, who was married first to Harley Thomas, killed accidentally. Their children are Missy and Kelly. Peggy married next Bob Cisco. They have no children.

Acie Vernon married Louise Porter; they had two boys, Kenneth and Keith. He next married Sigrid from Norway. The couple has no children.

Leon Jr. married Joan Rooney. Their children are Patrick, Ronnie, Mikell, and Michelle.

Robert Daniel married Joan Huff. They have two adopted children: Diane and Cindy. The couple owned and operated Fraser Funeral Home in Jacksonville for many years.

Leon and Oney belonged to First Baptist Church of Macclenny. The couple never owned a car, never learned to drive. They are buried in Mantown Cemetery south of Glen St. Mary.



Front Row: Carol Wheeler, Michael Fraser, Jeff Fraser, La Viece Smallwood, Cyndy Fraser. Back Row standing: Suzanne Ridaugh, Edsel Jones, Mary Louise Rhoden, Bobbie Rhoden, Wimpy Jones, Dwight Jones, Edwin Fraser, Judy Fraser, Carolyn Adkins, Nathaniel Fraser, Judy Long and Al Fraser. Missing: Arnold, Clyde and Gary Fraser, Linda Meade, Lewis and Ricky Fraser.

The Fraser Family in 1995 continues faithfully to hold family traditions sacred to the honor of their parents, grandparents, and great grandparents and value the legacy they have inherited. Inscribed on the six-foot family tree monument that hovers over the family graves in Mantown Cemetery south of Glen St. Mary is their family motto:

"Those who say love dieth, knoweth not the love of a family. It liveth forever."

The Fraser Family

It would most likely be agreed that the most illustrious and accomplished member of the Fraser family as far as politics is concerned is the late Senator Edwin Gardner Fraser. His love for family and people in general left me with not only memories I treasure but an example for all mankind. He was that kind of man and I knew him most intimately for most of my life.



Edwin G. Fraser

On June 29, 1974 an "Appreciation Day" tribute was paid to him and a chronology was submitted concerning his political offices. He was, and always will be one of our most respected and honored statesman, and certainly deserves never to be forgotten by all those who knew him, especially his family. Here is the sketch:

A LIFE IN PUBLIC OFFICE

Back in the early 1930's, young Edwin Fraser, who was not yet even twenty years of age, first got the idea of running for state office following a dispute with an uncle and

then the county's State Senator, T.J. Knabb. The older gentleman died before Fraser could make good on a promise to run against him, and it was 1935 when at the age of 21 he qualified to challenge 80 year old incumbent J.P. Sapp for Baker County's seat in the House of Representatives. The young politician ended up victorious in that first endeavor, beating Sapp by 78 votes and the next year serving as the youngest member in the Florida House. Before the end of that first two year term, Sapp decided to challenge him again, but the next election saw the elderly candidate stunned by a defeat of over 700 votes and Representative Fraser was well into his political career.

At the end of 1939, Ed Fraser took his first chance at a dream to be elected to the State Cabinet and qualified to challenge incumbent Comptroller J.M. Lee of Sebring. The issue was distribution of gas taxes back to rural counties and the campaigning Representative took his stand throughout Florida wearing out an old automobile with loudspeakers on the roof and 'speaking to anyone who would listen to me'. The exhausting three month bid, however, ended in defeat as the experienced Lee won by 75,000 votes. A half million cast ballots in that election.

It was back to the Southern States Nursery in Macclenny where the 29 year old Fraser dropped out of the political scene for four years until it was Baker County's turn to elect a 29th District State Senator. (In those years, Baker and Clay counties alternated Senate terms under what was described as a 'gentlemen's agreement.") He ran unopposed and served only two terms until the untimely death of Comptroller Lee in September of 1945. There began what was to turn into a memorable statewide controversy.

Just after Lee's death, the State Democratic Committee decided that Ed Fraser should be the replacement. Governor Millard Caldwell had different ideas and instead ignored the recommendation and appointed Clarence M. Gay of Orlando as Comptroller. When a special election was held later that year, Fraser's name was the only one on the ballot due to the party recommendation and Gay's write-in votes were insufficient to stop his election.

Edwin was never to serve as Comptroller. In February of 1946, the Florida Supreme Court struck down his election because as a

Senator he had voted for a raise for Cabinet officers and state law did not allow service under those conditions. He stepped down but the controversy rose again in the spring and fall of 1947 when he and Gay vied once again only to see the incumbent retain the post by a 50,000 vote margin. It was out of politics again until the county's next Senate opportunity in the spring of 1951.

Aid to the elderly became an issue in that campaign. Pitted against each other were Fraser and local Attorney B.R. Burnsed, Baker County Judge. He won that election by 800 votes.

His final bid for office following that term and a four year respite saw him contending with Walker C. Odom of Orange Park. The Chairman of the Clay County Commission, Odom qualified for the office with backing from both Baker and Clay county politicians despite the alternating term 'gentlemen's agreement'.

Odom dropped out of the race shortly after hearing Edwin deliver an emotionally charged speech on the right of Baker County to hold District 29.

At the end of the 1963 term, Edwin announced his retirement. Fate stepped in with the death of Senate Secretary Bob Davis of Tallahassee and the Senate leadership turned to Edwin and offered him the post. At first he turned it down, but after only one day at home, he called the Senate President, then Dewey Johnson of Quincy and informed him he would accept. On September 9, 1963, he was sworn in as Secretary of the Florida Senate, a post he held until retirement November 1, 1970.

His business and political careers were interrupted twice by serious heart disease. Just after Christmas, 1956, he suffered a heart attack that required repair by a then-new process known as an aneurysm, a patching of the heart that required a six week stay at Washington's Georgetown University Hospital. Exactly ten years later another sudden attack required a similar operation but this time it was performed in Jacksonville.

Edwin spent most of his political retirement years operating the prosperous Southern States Nursery south of Macclenny. The 875-acre nursery was taken over by his father following a mortgage foreclosure in the 1920's.

Possibly the most notable identification retained by Senator Fraser was from his association with the 'Porkchoppers', a term of vague origin that symbolized the coalition of rural legislators who virtually controlled Florida's political direction in the years prior to the 'one man-one vote' Supreme Court ruling that eventually brought redistricting. Led by such colorful characters as S.D. Clark of Monticello, known as the "Dean of the Porkchoppers", W.A. Shands of Gainesville, former Governor Charley Johns of Starke, Fraser and others the rural block fought for representation on an equal county basis as set forth by the former method of selecting Senators and Representatives from each of the state's 67 counties.

Senator Fraser spearheaded the drive to locate the thousand-bed Northeast Florida State Hospital in Macclenny, creating hundreds of jobs for Baker Countians. In the 1950s, he and others established a local hospital authority that led to the construction of Fraser Memorial Hospital. Statewide accomplishment was while Secretary the installation of a computer system to keep track of Florida's legislative business. His greatest honor was the dedication of the 72-page Florida Senate Handbook to both him and the late Senator Verle Pope of St. Augustine. No other statesmen share that honor. The text is now used as a general guidebook of Florida lawmaking with information on the state's past and present.

Edwin was born December 30, 1914 in Alachua County, Florida. He and eight brothers and sisters were children of James B. and Lizzie Howard Fraser and the family moved to Baker County from their farm near Newberry when Edwin was nine years old. He attended the Rex rural school until fourth grade and following the move, went to the former Sanderson school fifth grade through high school. Although he never went past the twelfth grade, his dream was to attend the University of Florida Law School. He was 16 at high school graduation and the economics of the times and large family ruled out a college education.

In praising Edwin Fraser at the Appreciation Day, his long-time friend and political ally, Baker County's former State Representative and Chief Judge of the Eighth Florida Judicial Circuit John J. Crews said. "I know of no other man that has given more in time and self, all at great expense, to progressive public service than Ed Fraser."

Edwin had been my personal friend since high school. He sometimes took me with him to political gatherings. He loved his family and often wrote letters and made visits to far-away places trying to find our forefathers. I was a teenager when he began sharing his love and interest in the family with me. On a trip to South Carolina he took a picture of Mordecai Fraser's homeplace, long torn down by the time I got to visit there.

Prior to his death, Edwin visited me and my husband in Jacksonville where we were living, and asked us to purchase some land in Baker County for our retirement. He said he needed us to help him work to accomplish some positive things for Baker County. We purchased some land as he requested, but he died six years before we moved. Before his death, I was attending the funeral of a family member at Manntown Cemetery, accompanied by my first cousin Carolyn Jones Adkins, when Edwin approached me and asked to speak with me. Carolyn and I sat in the car with him and watched sympathetically as this giant of a man shed tears of obvious pain and anguish. He told us of his grief at discovering that someone he trusted and had supposed to be his friend and ally in working for the betterment of Baker County had betrayed him and their friendship by trying to blacken his good name. He told us who the person was and we were saddened with him.

Yes, no other man has given more in time and self for Baker County than Edwin G. Fraser. His sweat and tears indelibly mark the land he trod and loved. He was a man of compassion and like another man who lived two thousand years ago, and who also felt the pains of betrayal from His trusted friend, Edwin Fraser will rise triumphant to be remembered with respect and appreciation. Surely as long as there is a Baker County he will unequivocally be recognized as its friend.

A Chronology of Political Offices

Edwin G. Fraser

1936—Elected to Florida House of Representatives over J.P. Sapp. Age 21.

1938—Elected to second term in House, same opponent.

1940—Age 26. Ran for Florida Comptroller against J.M. Lee of Sebring. Defeated in statewide campaign.

1944–Ran unopposed for Florida Senate.

1945–September. Chosen by Democratic Committee to fill comptroller vacancy upon Lee's death. Decision reversed by Governor Millard Caldwell.

1945–November. Elected Comptroller over appointee Clarence Gay of Orlando.

1946–February. Florida Supreme Court nullified election because Fraser voted comptroller salary increase while in Senate.

1947–Defeated by Gay in another try for Comptroller post.

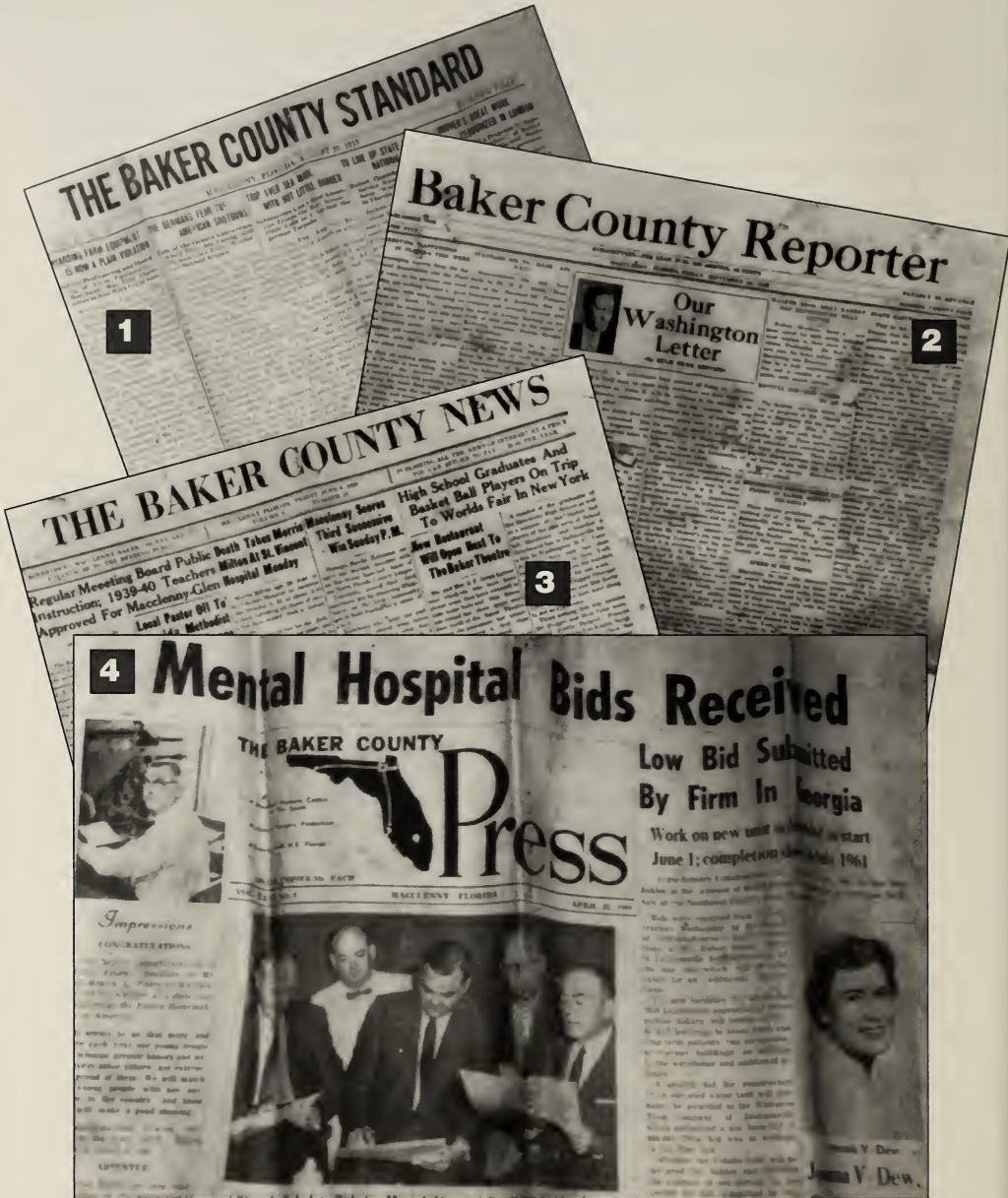
1952–Defeated B.R. Burnsed of Baker County for another term in Senate.

1960–Elected to final term in Senate unopposed following decision of W.C. Odom of Orange Park not to challenge traditional alternating term agreement between Clay and Baker counties.

1963–September 9. Accepted appointment as Secretary of Florida Senate following death of Robert Davis of Tallahassee.

1970–November 1. Retired from that post to devote full time to nursery business.

1978–December 23. Edwin Fraser died from a heart condition. His wife, the former Jackie Waters, followed him in death on January 6, 1988.



1 Vol. 17, No. 31 - August 23, 1918

2 Vol. 5, No. 24 - September 20, 1929

3 Vol. 3, No. 21 - Friday, June 9, 1939

4 Baker County Press Editor Tate Powell, Jr. wrote column Impressions - April 22, 1960

Newspapers in Baker County

We may never know exactly how many newspapers have been published in Baker County, but what we do know is that they have been an important part of our heritage.

The newspaper and publisher/editors I remember best were Tate Powell, Sr., and Tate Powell, Jr., who gave us *The Baker County Press*. The father and son team gave me my first opportunity to write which was done without charge in the beginning.

In high school during the early 1950's, I wrote "High school Highlights." In the summer, I wrote "Teen Times." After I married, I wrote a column titled "News and Views" with a Citizen of the Week feature. When I began my family and had to stop writing, Mr. Powell, Jr. had so many protests that he offered to pay me so I could afford a baby sitter just long enough to gather news and do interviews. Ten dollars a month went a long way back then when a baby sitter was \$1.50 for a half day. I was grateful, for I enjoyed the work immensely.

The thing I love to recall about the father and son Powell team is that they were community-oriented journalists. The Powells avoided vulgarity and sensationalism and, to me, attained the highest standards of journalism. They never, to my knowledge, blackened the character of individuals through distorted or false news stories, or violated the privacy of an individual to secure sensational stories. They were men of high ethical character.

The highest ideals of any profession are contained in its code of ethics. With the Powells went a past tradition that has not passed our way since. I sincerely hope their legacy will stand as an ensign to our community of the highest ideals of the journalist profession.

It would be almost a half century after my experience with the Powells that I would be part of a group of people who tried to re-establish the Powell's spirit of community involvement and journalism support in the community. But first----



- 1 1994 Baker County Press Editor: James C. McGauley - Nov. 17, 1994
- 2 First Edition Vol. 1, No. 1 The Baker County Standard - August 13, 1992
- 3 Second Edition Vol. 1, No. 1 The Baker County Standard - August 20, 1992

For the sake of history, I wanted to include a sketch of the life of newspapers in Baker County. Fortunately Gene Barber, Baker County's foremost historian, reported in his column, "The Way It Was," in *The Baker County Press*, April 19, 1979, that Mr. Tate Powell, Sr. told him that a small newspaper was being published in Sanderson as soon as the county was formed in 1861. He surmised it folded during the Civil War and said that was the end of newspapering in the county until ex-Confederate Charles A. Findley (Finley) of Lake City, established *The Star* at Sanderson in 1866.

In the mid-1870's, Findley moved *The Star* to Darbyville (McClenny). A one-fold sheet called *The Press* took its place in Sanderson, owned and edited by a Baptist preacher, school teacher, and singing master named Professor Carr. *The Press* passed from Professor Carr to a Columbia County native named Mott Howard and he published *The Press* in Sanderson until the county seat was moved to McClenny.

Meanwhile Captain Findley ceased publication of *The Star* in Macclenny and moved to Gainesville. Gene said a man named Matthews moved into McClenny soon after the county seat change and published *The Sentinel* until the late 1800's.

Matthews, I found, was James Bosworth Matthews, originally from Lockport, New York, and a newspaperman from Chicago before moving to Florida with his French- Canadian wife, Margaret Newman, in 1890. He was the grandfather of Ida May Matthews Padgett and great-grandfather of Mary Estelle Padgett Ferry, all of Baker County.

Gene wrote that Mr. C.D. Allen, a man from the North, published *The McClenny Standard* around the turn of the century, and said that Allen and his mother lived in the John O. Thompson house on Florida Avenue (across from the parking lot of the present-day post office). His print shop was in the upper floor of a house around the corner on College Street.

Gene's next account was of a young veteran of the Spanish-American War who ambled into McClenny looking for opportunities. Tate Powell, he characterized, was an olive-complexioned native of Bradford County, of Welsh ancestry and old and illustrious North Carolina stock. He purchased *The McClenny Standard* for \$500 in

the early part of 1905. Powell was taught the printing trade by a German tramp printer and began working upstairs in Mr. C.D. Allen's print shop. He left McClenny for about 12 years but returned in 1929, purchased *The Standard* again, and renamed it *The Baker County Press*. It listed Powell and Powell, Editors and Publishers.

We owe Gene a big debt of gratitude for his worthy contribution. But I found more information from reading actual copies of the newspapers of Baker County.



In 1885, *The Baker County Star* was being published in the county by D. Davis, who was editor and proprietor with J. Faus as his associate. It was hailed as the "Official Paper of Baker County." The *Star* published a supplement that contained tax delinquent notices that year. *The Baker County Star* was published in 1886.

In 1887, *The Baker County Sentinel* was published by W. Newbern and W.W. Moore for \$1.50 annually, if paid in advance or \$2 if not in advance. A half year subscription was \$1 in advance or \$1.25 if not in advance. County officers for that year were reported April 9, 1887 in *The Baker County Sentinel* as Judge of Probate, F.B. Smith; Clerk of Courts, F.J. Pons; Sheriff, J.W. Van Buskirk; Assessor of Revenue, A.J.W. Cobb; Collector of Revenue, J.W. Burnsed; County Commissioners, D.H. Rowe, J.C. Williams, W.J. Thompson, William Jennings and G.R. Rice; Treasurer, F.M. Douglas; Superintendent of Public Instruction, George Abbott, and Justice of Peace, C.C. Corbett.

In June of 1889 *The Macclenny Sentinel* was published by Sentinel Publishing Company, listed as the Editors and Proprietors.

In 1890, *The Macclenny Sentinel* was being published by F.H. Matthews, owner and proprietor. In February 1891, *The Macclenny Sentinel* was continuing to be published by Matthews.

In 1893, *The Macclenny Sentinel*, dated February 15, listed owner publisher J.B. Matthews, Vol IX No 3.

In May 1894, *The Macclenny Sentinel* continued being published by Jas. B. Matthews and reported that it was a member of the Florida Press Association.

In 1895, *The Baker County Press* is published with P.A. Ruhl as local editor. Annual subscription, \$1; Six months, 50 cents.

Later in 1895, *The Baker County Press* local editor was Mott Howard.

Even later in 1895, *The Baker County Press* -- dated October 17th -- listed the president as J.L. Herndon, Mott Howard as the secretary and treasurer and P.A. Ruhl as business manager. The motto was, "Blow Your Own Horn".

In 1898, *The Baker County Press* editor was Mott Howard.

In 1899, *The Baker County Press* listed John A. Rhoden as editor.

In 1918, *The Baker County Standard* was owned by Mrs. Annie S. Helvenston. R.L. Helvenston was editor and manager. It was published every Friday by The Standard Publishing Company. The paper, dated August 23, announced that it was the only newspaper in Baker County.

In 1922, *The Baker County Standard*, July 22 edition, the Publisher was listed as Avery G. Powell. Vol. XXI No. 31.

In 1929, *Baker County Reporter* was being published, established 1925 Volume Five, Number Twenty-Nine, Friday, October 25. The paper reported that it was a successor to *Baker County Standard* and published every Friday at Macclenny, Fla. by Sprintow Publishing Company. Mrs. Iva Townsend Sprinkle, Owner and Editor, T.D. Proctor, Manager, Fifty-two issues for \$1.50, No Distinction--Terms cash to all.

In 1939, *The Baker County News* was being published. Volume 3, Number 21 was dated Friday June 9. Subscription \$1, annually. It was published by the Baker County Publishing Company. Al Parker, Editor, Q.T. Milton, Local Editor.

Since 1929, *The Baker County Press* has been steadily published in Baker County. Gene Barber's account recalled that in the early 1960's, Tate Sr. sold to Tate Jr. and his son, Ray Powell.

In the following decade, *The Baker County Press* changed hands three times. Its format went to National Enquirer size, and its ink turned red. Tate Jr. took *The Baker County Press* back over and sold out in 1974 to Jim McGauley, present-day editor and publisher.

On August 12, 1992, *The Baker County Standard* began publication in the county. It was established by a group of Baker County citizens who desired a newspaper that would support more community news and

establish a degree of professional and ethical journalism for the community. Its motto is, "A Measure of Community Excellence." It is located at 2 East Macclenny Avenue, on the corner of Fifth Street in the historic Power's Sundry building. Some of *The Baker County Standard* investors purchased the building in 1993.

I served as the founding president and, along with five other investors, on the organizing board of directors. The directors were Patricia Gray, a successful Baker County realtor; Dave Raver,



Tate Powell, Jr. Editor, Baker County Press

local postmaster; Ron Vonk, Intermediate School Principal, and Bobbie Sue Rowe, local floral designer. It was a team effort, meeting sometimes more than once a day to make decisions as the reality of bringing another newspaper to the county began to unfold.

The first edition, Vol. 1 No. 1, of *The Baker County Standard* was a disappointment to the Standard Board of Directors and investors, so much so that another Vol. 1 No. 1 was published the following week.

For some of us, it still has not reached the criteria that we envisioned, even though it almost made it to the top of our expectations once. It brought new friendships and strengthened some of the old. It brought sweet dreams as well as nightmares, and it is still hoped by a few that the spirit that brought it forth will prevail over the advent of adversity that is always prevalent when you try and do something good for mankind.

I have kept a personal, detailed journal, of The Standard's organization since its inception. The journal expresses my personal opinion and views and not necessarily those of others even though some of us remain in perfect accord.

The first editor of The Standard was a Florida State University graduate, Jeff Moriarty, who resigned amiably after a year to accept a career advancement with The Gainesville Sun, where he has since progressed rapidly. In my opinion, Jeff did the best job thus far to bring The Standard up to an exalted position among weekly newspapers, and to reach the Standard of Excellence for which The Standard was brought forth to do. He was easy to work with, extremely respectful, and an excellent journalist. Jeff is sorely missed. To replace Jeff in August, 1994, the Board of Investors hired Mike Mann, from Orange Park, who had been working as a journalist in Dalton, Georgia. In November 1994, the Board of Investors replaced Mr. Mann with Nancy Rowell, a young, 24-year-old writer from Douglas, Georgia.

In 1995, it was decided by the Board of Directors to make major changes at The Baker County Standard and they are presently underway *as this volume goes to print*.

The two weekly newspapers in Baker County, *The Baker County Press* and *The Baker County Standard* serve a good purpose, and that is to give the people of Baker County, who so desire, a choice of speech and journalism.



**THE CHAIN GANG
LEFT TO RIGHT:
Tommy Johns,
Albert Byrd,
Lawrence Barton,
Boston Dicks,
Maurice Prevatt**



MACCLENNY'S FIRST FOOTBALL TEAM

(Back row l-r), Coach Jimmy Mott, Alan Harvey, Ray Powell, Gerald Brown, D.W. Finley, Albert Byrd, Wilbur Wilkerson; (middle) Billy Dykes, LuClare Chessman, James Rowe, Jimmy Zipperer, Reuel Anderson, Edward Thompson, Billy Overstreet, Earl Green; (front) Alvin Piatt, Carl Green, Joe Barber, Ovid Thomas, Claudell Walker, Van Harris, Wildon Cook, Hubert Crews, Lester Burnsed and David Foley. Not pictured: Boston Dicks.

**PRESENT DAY
CHAIN GANG
AND MEMBERS
OF THE
WILDCAT FIRST
FOOTBALL TEAM
IN 1993 (L-R):**

**CG: Maurice
Prevatt, Albert
Byrd, Denver
Dicks, LuClare
Chessman, Alan**



**'Pete' Harvey (made first touchdown), Gerald Brown, Van Harris,
David foley, Claudell Walker and Lawrence Barton.**

Baker County's First Football Team

A Beginning

"In those days the school didn't have the money to support anything like football so the citizens had to get it going."

Dickie Davis

"Only one of us had ever seen a football game because there was no TV back in them days and very few radios in Baker County."

Boston Dicks

Each Friday night when Baker County's roaring Wildcat football team meets the fighting opposition during football season it is beneath glaring stadium lights, and on an immaculately-sodded turf amid the noise of many faithful fans. Among the throng there is always a unique group of fans whose loyal, steadfast and constant team vigil has been continuous for all of Baker County's 48-year-old football history.

One of the most loyal is Lawrence Barton and, in spite of a recent stroke, he's missed very few of the Wildcat's games in the history of Wildcat football.

"I never did get to play football myself," said the 69-year-old sports devotee. "I had to quit school in the 8th grade. But when Macclenny got a football team in 1945, I started out with 'em and have only missed a very few of their games since."

Barton said the team's first name was Pirates, but later, when they found out Fernandina's team had that name because they were near the ocean, Macclenny's team changed to Wildcats to better suit the surrounding wooded area.

Barton is where he started out, serving on the chain gang. He has worked with many stalwart cronies through the years, like Sanderson's Buck Mann and Macclenny's Billy Knabb, but they've all

come and gone for one reason or another. He holds the record for the longest active chain gang volunteer, whose job it is to measure the yardage with two chains as the team progresses toward a touchdown -- and a half inch can mean the difference between a 4th down and a first down, he emphasizes. In spite of his passion for his hometown team, he is required to remain neutral and work closely with the referee during the game.

"That's a laugh," said one of his present-day chain gang partners, Maurice Prevatt, who played on the Wildcat team in 1949-53. "You should see his face and hear him murmuring under his breath when the Wildcats are penalized. 'Why that's against US,' he'll howl."

"Yeah, I get more fun watching Lawrence on the field than I do the actual game," said Boston Dicks, another chain gang member who played on Macclenny's first football team.

Barton admits he gets mighty excited sometimes and lets his emotions get out of hand. "I hit a referee one time . . . way back then," he said.

"Yeah, and I remember a time you invited one of them to come over the fence," reminded Prevatt.

"Well," retorts Barton. "I'm not the only one who's supposed to be neutral that gets into trouble. I remember when Mike Gazdick got to bad-mouthing the referee from his announcer stand one night. Of course, I agreed with him so we both got thrown out. If we hadn't left, they would have penalized our team."

Barton and Gazdick (a former Wildcat coach) aren't the only ones who watch the Wildcat team so devotedly. It goes back to the team's organization almost a half century ago. Many of those first team-members are still ardent fans who buy season passes and vividly remember how it all started.

Albert Byrd, who started on Macclenny's first team, and Tommy Johns, who joined the Wildcats as an 8th grader in 1952, are ardent Wildcat supporters who have worked for more than a decade with Barton on the Chain Gang. They met recently, with other old-timers, and reminisced about the time it all started way back in 1945.

Jimmy Mott, a railroad employee, volunteered his time to teach the high school boys, below the age of 18, how to play football. He

inspired the interest of the town's leading citizens, who pooled their resources to purchase the team's uniforms when about 25 boys showed interest. Edwin Fraser, a civic leader and Baker County's state senator, drove to Atlanta to get them, just in time for the first game of the season, they all remembered.

"In those days the school didn't have the money to support anything like football, so the citizens had to get it going," said Dickie Davis, who began playing during the Wildcats' second season.

"Only one of us had ever even seen a football game because there was no TV back in those days and very few radios in Baker County," said Dicks. "Mott taught the boys the best he could on a blackboard during school and practiced with them after school in a converted corn field," he said.

"We dressed out in an old wooden primitive shack, and later they installed a cold shower for us," said Davis. "And we hauled many a pile of dirt in wheel barrows to fill up the ruts and level it off so we'd have a place to play," he said. "I remember that the second year the townspeople got together and bought the poles and lights and Florida Power and Light put 'em up free of charge for us. The first field ran north and south just east of the present-day gym."

When the team was ready to play its first game, the citizens came out in full support for the afternoon event, even though there were no seats for them to sit on.

"I remember when Grandma Carrie Davis went home after that first game and seriously said to the family, 'well, the only thing I saw them do was run back there and squat down to smell each others tails and come out fighting,'" laughed Johns.

"That's just how much any of us knew about football," said Dickie Davis, of his mother's remark. Davis played four years.

The Pirates won only one game that first year when they beat Jennings. Alan "Pete" Harvey, who later ascended to the status of Baker County's School Superintendent, holds the distinction of making the team's first glorious touchdown, and Claudell Walker made the next acclaimed two.

"It was kind of discouraging trying to get the team started," said Davis. "It was rough because we didn't know what we were doing, but it was worth it."

"It took us all year to find out where they were hiding that football," said Walker, who admitted he called most of the team's plays even though he wasn't quarterback most of the time.

"I've seen the time when we would need a yard for a first down and didn't know what play to call to get it," said Prevatt.

"Our announcer was John Wolfe and he just sat at a table out on the side of the field with a microphone," said Byrd, "and we didn't have a doctor on the field until Dr. John Watson came to Macclenny in 1947."

When the team entered its second year, the school hired a football coach named Antone Koenienger.

"He was a fine coach. Instead of winning one out of nine games we were winning nine out of ten games," said Johns.

"He walked the streets at night and if he saw you out after dark you had to run extra laps," said Walker.

"I remember how he used to take a flashlight and go up and down the isles in the Chessman Movie Theater looking for his players who might be there instead of home in bed," said Davis.

Koenienger began taking the team for two weeks' training at the old government lodge on Ocean Pond. He taught them how to strengthen their muscles by running and exercising.

"Different men in the town, like my daddy (Richard Davis), Billy and Earl Knabb, Hugh Griffin and Edwin Fraser, would bring groceries that they'd bought and cook for us at night," said Davis.

"It was exciting for all of us because there just wasn't anything else to do around here, and we really went all out for the sport and so did the townspeople. We got on a winning streak with all the support.

"Koenienger had an old 1946 Chevrolet slant-back coupe, and we'd push it around the field while he guided it so we could build up our leg muscles," he said. "We didn't have all this fancy bodybuilding equipment like they do today."

"And you'd better not drink anything stronger than Delaware Punch. Koenienger didn't smoke or drink and he didn't allow any of his players to do it. He was a great coach," said Byrd.

Sometimes the team was short of players. Dicks remembers a game with Newberry.

"I got thrown out of the game for unnecessary roughness and Koenienger just gave me another shirt with another number and sent me back in. You could never get away with that today."

"I remember that old black wool stripe on our uniforms that ran down our leg scratched me so bad I could barely stand it and my shoes were so big I had to stuff cotton in the toes of 'em," said Johns. "I could turn my head in the helmet and it wouldn't even turn with me it was so big," he said.

"Our first helmets only had one strap and didn't have a face guard," explained Byrd.

Walker carries a constant reminder of the antiquated helmet. He still has a visible cleat scar directly on his forehead.

They remember when first-year team-member Alvin Piatt had his spleen busted. And Davis said it was he and teammate Dwight Harris who saved his life.

Davis said Piatt, who died two years ago while awaiting a heart transplant, left the practice field one day and went home. His teammates suspected he was hurt and later that night Davis and Harris went to check on him. Thinking no one was home when they saw a darkened house, they turned to leave.

"That's when we heard Alvin inside moaning," said Davis. "We went inside and he told us he was ill. He was alone, so we went for coach Koenienger who loaded Alvin into his car. Then we drove to St. Luke's Hospital, in Jacksonville, where we learned he had a busted spleen and enlarged bladder. They said he would have been dead in another few hours. Coach Koenienger signed for him to be operated on about midnight and we stayed with him until daylight the next morning."

The team's first water boy, Adam "Pee Wee" Brinson -- past president of the USF&G Sugar Bowl -- received a broken arm once, Davis said.

"We would exercise by laying on our backs with our feet up in the air and take turns sitting on each other's feet to lift them up in the air and strengthen our legs. Pee Wee was on Byrd's legs and fell off. He had to wear a cast a long time," said Davis.

"We were all proud of our football team from the very beginning and we haven't stopped," said Johns, who is still a very close

friend to Brinson, who eventually played football at South Georgia College in Douglas where he was coached by Bobby Bowden, now of Florida State.

Brinson, 5'7" and 135 pounds, eventually played baseball for the University of Georgia on Jim Whatley's team. It is said when he was issued the smallest uniform available, it had to be taken up six inches in the waist and that the knees to the baggy pants actually gathered around his ankles. He became Whatley's third catcher and utility infielder. He was known as the kid with enough heart to make all of the teams, with baseball being his best sport. Brinson is now the successful owner of several New Orleans car dealerships and still a great Wildcat fan and supporter.

"'Pee Wee,' now professionally known as Adam, was our faithful water boy. I'd see him kneeling down on the sidelines making the sign of the cross when we'd be close to making a touchdown," said Johns. "He didn't even know what it meant; I didn't either. We both knew it meant something about praying, but when we'd get behind, or try to score, Pee Wee would just squat down real quick and make the sign," said Johns.

There is a legend that abounds about the first Macclenny football team, and Davis says it's true because he was there:

"It all began when a circus came to town," he said. "They advertised for someone to come and try to beat the gorilla, offering a dollar a minute as long as anyone could stay in the cage with him. Well, me and Tweety Byrd (Albert Byrd's nickname) were watching that gorilla throw everyone out. Finally, Byrd said, 'That man has got that gorilla trained. Watch him grab the top of the cage and when someone steps in he snatches their foot out from under them'. Then he told me, 'I can beat that gorilla.' So Byrd, who weighed about 250 lbs, got in the cage, and sure enough that old gorilla grabbed hold of the top of the cage and swung down and grabbed Tweety Byrd's foot. Tweety Byrd stood firm and started beating that old gorilla in the head with both hands. That old gorilla turned loose of Tweety Byrd's foot and ran and got behind the trainer and wouldn't come out. Byrd had beat him. The trainer handed Byrd a dollar, but Byrd insisted the trainer pay him three dollars for the three minutes he was in the cage with

the gorilla. The trainer refused. Everyone gathered around the cage and started rattling it so the trainer paid Byrd his money for the fair fight."

Davis said his mother, a fervent Wildcat fan, was impressed when she heard the story. When the Wildcats bounced out on the field at their next home game, his mother overheard someone on the opposing team saying how they planned to beat the Wildcats.

"Mama walked over to 'em and said. 'That's what you think. Byrd's done whipped a gorilla's a--, and now he's going to beat yours."

"That story will never die in this town," the friends say. "We're always being asked if it's true, and it's really true."

The football pioneers have remained friends throughout all their lives and now watch their grandchildren prance out on the sodded turf with tremendous pride as many of their granddaughters cheer them on to victory. They admit times have changed, but they hope the steadfast loyal support for the Wildcats will be as devoted as theirs has been for generations yet to come. And they hope the legend lives on.



**Left: Casey Dinkins
Right: Elgin Barnes
Baker County Historical Society**

Elgin Barnes

**1994
Baker
County
Historical
Society
Macclenny,
Florida
formerly
the
old jail**



BAKER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY VOLUNTEERS

In special appreciation of Casey Dinkins and Elgin Barnes

"If you think you are a Raulerson, you might be, but then again you might not be," says Elgin Barnes, a valuable volunteer of library services and compiler of numerous publications at the Baker County Historical Society.

"And if you are following my lineage and think you are a Barnes, you won't be. You would be a Roland," he firmly states.

And if your name is Dobson and you believe you are different in lineage from the Dopson clan, think again, you are one and the same in ancestry. The reasons why are found in the BCHS Library.

Elgin, along with Casey Dinkins, who serves as historian, curator, and library director, volunteer countless hours at their own expense to gather and preserve historical records of area families for the Baker County Historical Society. What genealogical facts they know about your family tree may surprise, and even shock you. Both agree that the lineage discrepancies all have to do with family traditions, folk lore and handed-down stories. It could be -- or it could not be true. Those who really know, are all dead.

Casey was born north of Sanderson across the road from present-day Dinkin's Church. His father, Edward Pendelton Dinkins, built the original church in 1908 for his mother, Melvina Dopson Dinkins, because the nearest church at the time was 20 miles away -- and, by horse and wagon, a good day's journey. The building was rebuilt in the 1930's and again in the 1990's. Casey's grandfather, Joseph John Dinkins, a Civil War veteran, came into Baker County in 1870 from Charlton County, Georgia, and settled north of Sanderson near the present-day Dinkins Church location, next door to his brother Belone/Belona Dinkins. He fell in love with Baker County native

Melvina Texas Dopson and they married. Their child, America Texas Dinkins married William "Pink" Raulerson and the couple became the parents of 13 children, resulting in a large Baker County posterity.

Casey's mother was Mollie Annie Yarbrough, daughter of John Yarbrough and Anna Hodge, and although Casey moved from Baker County about the age of six years, he connects to some of the largest clans in this area. It was on Casey's first visit to the Baker County Historical Society that he first met a Yarbrough cousin, Beulah Yarbrough Wilford, and, with her urging, became a life member of the Society. Since that day 11 years ago, he has been a steady building force behind the BCHS. And that was only a beginning. As he began to learn about his heritage he visited the county cemeteries. Finding that some family plots had long been neglected and many pioneers were without tombstone markers, he really began to work. He started with North Prong cemetery, then Cedar Creek, Turner cemetery (which is technically Dinkins), travelled into Moniac to the Canaday cemetery, then on to South Prong and others, cleaning, repairing, replacing and adding, all at his personal expense.

Enter Elgin Barnes, only his name isn't really Elgin Barnes. He is Elgin J.R. Roland. His grandfather was John Roland, but when he came into Florida about 1890, from Robson County, North Carolina, he changed his name to John Roland Barnes. Elgin doesn't know why the name was changed. His father was given the name of Lynn Adair Barnes, not Lynn Adair Roland.

"My name has always been a problem for me," said Elgin. "I'm known as Elgin, but my birth certificate says, Elgin J.R. Barnes. Since my grandfather was John Roland Barnes I'm referred to as Junior by some. The army enlisted me as Elgin Jr. Barnes, but that's not what is on my birth certificate. My driver's license was issued in the name Elgin John Barnes. The clerk asked me what the J.R. stood for and I told her nothing, just the initials of my grandfather. Then she asked me what the initial J stood for and I told her John so she insisted putting Elgin John Barnes. That's been about 20 years ago and it's still listed that way in Tallahassee. My military records are in the name Elgin Jr. Barnes, so I just sign my name Elgin J. Barnes. It's a mixed up world especially when I try and explain it to others," he laughed.

The two men often find good-natured humor in the traditions of mixed up lineages and names, but some things they are sure about.

"I know how my name Casey came about," quips Elgin's co-worker. "It was because Casey Jones was being whistled by everyone when I was born. It's a girl's name but I can't help it," Casey tells him.

They are, nonetheless very proud of their heritage.

"Roland, North Carolina, is named after our Roland family," says Elgin proudly. "My great grandfather was Dr. John Sanders Roland, and he goes all the way back to England," he smiles.

Casey's greatest interest is in lineages. Elgin's work, assisted by his wife, Dorothy Mobley Barnes, has taken them to every Baker County cemetery and some outside area locations, and the result is the publication of their findings.

The two men gather information and compile the records. They make it clear it is up to the researcher to discern fact from fiction, but if you visit the library, then this is a sample of what you could find in the records, especially if you are looking for Crews or Raulersons descending from Mack Raulerson and Emily Narcissus Crews.

"Mack Raulerson was really the son of James M. Albritton, a military officer in the area around Baxter. Albritton married Fanny Raulerson, but he fathered Mack through Elizabeth, Fanny's sister, who had about six or eight children out of wedlock. She never married and Mack is the only one a record refers to as the father of any of her children."

There are bulging record books on the families of Raulerson/Albritton/Crews and the various family ties.

"I'm not in a position to say anything certain, because I wasn't there when any of this happened," said Casey. "But the records are here for someone to think what they will."

Presumably, the Raulersons listed in the book are really all Albrittons. For example, Caroline Raulerson, Mack's daughter who married Jode Thrift and bore him 12 children, should have been Caroline Albritton, not Raulerson. If that is true, then hundreds of her posterity follow the Raulerson lineage instead of Albritton.

Both Elgin and Casey are retired from Civil Service, and Casey also retired from the Naval Reserve. They average 30-40 hours a week

working to preserve records pertaining to Baker County. Most of the time they can be found in the BCHS library on Tuesdays and Saturdays. And during the week? Well, most likely in a cemetery somewhere, recording, replacing, repairing, or a myriad other jobs.

Baker County could never repay these men for the good deeds they are doing, but neither men expect them to. Their dedication to the work of history preservation will be examined and explored as long as there is a Baker County, and -- like many a good antique -- prized more greatly as the years pass on.

The Historic Franklin Mercantile

For decades it has stood guard, watching over the serene and peaceful little town of Glen St. Mary. Through two world wars, the Great Depression, and natural disasters, The Franklin Mercantile has remained steadfast, a tribute to the quality of life of a by-gone era.

Although the exact construction date of the stately two-story building is unknown, the main portion is believed to have been built prior to 1897. From the spring of 1911, Jesse Earl Franklin and his family lived here in the family quarters with its neighborly front porch swing and inviting rocking chairs amid a wide variety of the family's beautiful plants and blooming flowers. They operated a general mercantile and post office in the main building until Earl's retirement as postmaster in 1959. He and his wife, Miss Sally, are still fondly remembered by many today.

Playing a significant role in the development of the community, the Mercantile served as the social and commercial center of town, affording the local folks news from far away places, as well



**Left: Cathy
Right: Tonda
In front of Mercantile**

as necessary provisions of the day. With the train depot just across the railroad tracks, the Franklin Mercantile was truly a gathering place. After Earl's death in 1968, though, it seems as if time stood still there.

Year after year, the talented Tomlinson sisters, Tonda Griffis and Cathy Mendolera, like so many others, were smitten with the grand old building and often stood in awe and gazed inquisitively at the curious old, rugged and aged structure with the inviting homespun balcony. It finally dawned on them; this could be the perfect setting for an old- time general store again.

With the help of Earl's only son, Cecil Franklin, the sisters' dream became a reality and in 1992, after 81 years in the Franklins' possession, the Mercantile began a new chapter in its history.

Today, the grand old edifice is surrounded in a sentimental atmosphere, overflowing with elegance and charm. It is a showcase for the handiwork of local artists, craftsmen and writers.

Old fashioned rocking chairs deck the porch with folksy charm, while inside an inviting and challenging checkerboard summons you to play a game. An assortment of local history books bids you to relax and recall the past.

"Miss Kathryn's Parlor" invites one to browse among a wide selection of antiques and collectibles. The cupboard in "Granny's Kitchen" is filled with a wide variety of archaic and Depression Era dishes, kitchen gadgets and rare curios of days past.



Left: Cathy
Right: Tonda

Most unique is the “Man-tiques” room, catering to the masculine collector or browser, and set apart from the woman’s world of antiquated relics.

Visitors shop to strains of nostalgic melodies intermingled with the aromas of mulling spices and potpourri. Occasionally, you are treated to a slice of Cathy’s old-timey bread pudding and always the charm of the two radiant sisters.

Whatever you are looking for, or hoping to see, you’ll most likely find it, and more, at The Historic Franklin Mercantile.

The sisters invite you to come stroll down memory lane with them at Franklin Mercantile. You’re sure to enjoy the visit and return again and again with your friends.

Call (904) 259-6040 for more information.

The store is opened Wednesdays through Saturdays from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m.



Left: Cathy
Right: Tonda

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have asked me how I became interested in writing, especially as it developed into so many varied phases: diaries, journals, poetry, songs, letters, short stories, features, interviews and on and on. So this is that story because

I owe a debt of gratitude and acknowledgement to many people who have paved the way for me to do the work I have always loved and had an avid interest in.

Through my paternal lineage there has been a succession of writers, some famous and some, like me, who write for the enjoyment and fulfillment it brings. To those who came before me I owe much for my endowment.

Edgar Lee Masters, a great American writer, and I share a great grandfather Notley Masters. It has been said by many that his literary offerings changed the course of American literature. He is best known among his countless contributions for his Spoon River Anthology, and he has written verses, songs and satires. World Book encyclopedia says "his writing style is that of his own instead of regular form. His works reflect that of his life and his portrayal of characters is remarkable."

I regret to say I've never read his many contributions although I have an autographed copy of "Across Spoon River" about our Masters family.....a gift from his son Hilary, also a writer. Colleagues and educators have told me that we possess the same style and characterization of writing skills, and for those observations I am humbled. My narratives, in whatever form, are not written with any thought of achieving literary distinction. Far from it. It is merely an effort to leave in some form of preservation things of a much simpler and less hurried, less harried age. Things we may be too busy to sit and listen to now yet will want to know in later years. In tracing the Master's family tree, I have interviewed many members of this family who possess writing

skills and are adept at writing family sketches just as Edgar, though they are not as famous. Like me, they are amateurs who do it for the love and enjoyment of it. Before my Uncle Homer Moore died, he wrote me long descriptive discourses on members of our family that he knew personally, but who died long before I was born. His sister, my Aunt Ruth Campbell, wrote a book, like Edgar, on the family, for the love and fun of it. My favorite letters are shared with Aunt Ruth's granddaughters, Suzanne Banks Potts, and Marilyn Banks Horn, of Atlanta Georgia. Their lively descriptions of people, places and things, are more vividly portrayed than any famous authors I have read. Therefore, I firmly believe that my Father in Heaven has given this particular family talents with a mission. I'm very proud to say too, that all three of my children keep journals and family records, all three write poetry and interesting descriptive letters. My daughter Teri is editor of her company's newsletter. When Teri's daughter, Kayla, was only two she discovered my pictorial journal on the dining table, grabbed a pen, and quickly made her writing debut directly on top of what I had written and illustrated with photos. I was so thrilled to think she might be the next family scribe that I couldn't very well get upset with her. And how thrilled I was when my 11 year old granddaughter Tabitha requested a diary for Christmas, and my 10 year old grandson Ryan asked for a journal. Of course, I honored their request. Tabitha, who is a 7th generation Baker Countian, became a Middle School columnist/reporter for The Baker County Standard and did a great job. Her award winning poem, What I Want To Be, is published in the 1990 Baker County-Wide Homecoming book. So I am very grateful for my heritage.

Had it not been for my mother, Blanche Fraser Moore, moving to North Carolina when I was twelve I might never have thought about writing professionally. It was there, in Wilmington, that I lived across the street from a girl, my age, who wrote a column about teen-agers for the local paper. When I returned to Macclenny in 1950 and entered the sophomore class, I approached Mr. Tate Powell, Sr. and his son, Tate Jr. about doing a column called "High School Highlights". They gave me my first job...without pay of course. It was so much fun that I extended it into the summer months as "Teen Times". When I graduated

from Macclenny-Glen High School, Tate, Jr. offered to send me to college to pursue writing, but I was not in a position to consider his offer. A few years later, after I began my marriage and children, I wrote a column for him called, "News and Views" that contained the comings and goings of Baker Countians and the local social activities. Sometimes I added a "Citizen of the Week" to my column, highlighting senior citizens. I worked free but when my family began to expand, and I had no money for baby sitters, I reluctantly gave it up. Mr. Powell called me up and said he had people 'storming my door in protest that your writing has ceased' so he offered me \$10 a month to continue. That was a lot of money in 1957. It was enough to pay some one \$1.25 for a whole afternoon to sit with my napping children and clean my house too while I went out getting news and doing interviews.

But that all ended when we moved away from Baker County and I chose to devote the next two decades to being a homemaker and writing for personal enjoyment.

In the late 1970s I became a close friend of Nancy Weir, Food Editor for the Florida Times Union. Nancy read a story I wrote on Emily (Davis) (Mrs. Clede) Harvey from Baker County. She shared the story with Doreen Sharkey, her editor in Lifestyle, who in turn obtained permission from me to publish it in the cooking section of a Thursday's edition of The Florida Times Union.

The story received an immediate response from the public who requested the paper print more such stories. Doreen asked me to become the Country Cooking feature writer for the Lifestyle section. Many of the stories I wrote are about Baker Countians.

To Nancy and Doreen I owe a debt of gratitude. And for our continuing friendship I am grateful.

In addition to the Country Cooking features, Nancy had paved the way for me to meet the Week-End Editor, Elvin Henson, about writing a column on genealogy. At first he was reluctant to hire someone inexperienced in journalism, but after the story on Emily Harvey appeared he gave me the chance to write for him. For his confidence in giving me an opportunity to become a regular columnist for The Florida Times Union I shall forever be thankful. The chance has given me an enormous amount of opportunities and wonderful experiences

through the years. Though he has retired, we keep in touch and share a friendship that I treasure. In addition, Mr. Henson published multitudinous of my week-end feature stories, on front page and in color. I wrote about people from all walks of life.....and found the experience exhilarating.

I had the same experience writing for the Times-Union Features Department. It was Features Editor, Ripley Hotch, who first mentioned that I should consider publishing my stories in a book. He told me that the portions of my features being edited for space were too good to be lost. He encouraged me to keep my hard copy and consider publishing them complete with all the information I had gathered.

And had it not been for the opportunity Lifestyle Editor, Norm Going, gave me to interview Loretta Lynn, I might have never gained the confidence to interview and write about other celebrities like Alex Haley, Donna Fargo, Conway Twitty and Pat Summerall. For Norm's confidence, I am indeed indebted.

To Bill Roach, who has edited Volumes III, IV, and V of the Once Upon a Lifetime series for me, I am equally indebted. He was one of my professors at the University of North Florida. Since he and his wife Chris share an interest in genealogy, we became friends, and have remained so over the years. I deeply appreciate all the assistance and counsel he so willingly gives me.

And even with all the above, this book and any others that follow, may not have been possible without the love and devotion, patience and caring shown by my son Zac. When I first began writing for the Times Union I used an old, very old, manuel typewriter. Zac encouraged me to get an electric type writer, but I was afraid of power failure and not meeting a deadline. So he just walked in one day with a top of the line Olivetti and said, 'just try it Mom'. I kept it, and couldn't imagine life without it, but I also kept that old manuel 'just in case'. Then the computer age dawned, and Zac was telling me I needed a computer. Once again I wouldn't hear of something that 'might break down', or in computer language, 'crash', and leave me stranded. In 1992 when I received one for Christmas, I knew it was Zac who had put it on Santa's list. Today, I can't even imagine this book, or any other thing I

write, going to print with out it. Zac has furnished me software, and any assistance, I may need on the computer, but it is for his patience and empathy (my computer and I have a very long way to go before we understand each other), and support that I am most grateful.

The One I shall give the most credit is my Heavenly Father. He has provided me with all these good friends, opportunities and counsel, for which I am void of expression when it comes to verbalizing my deep and heartfelt gratitude. It is to Him that I give all the honor, and credit that may ever come for this work.

La Viece (Moore-Fraser) Smallwood 1995

PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE BY

La Viece (Moore-Fraser) Smallwood

Once Upon a Lifetime in Baker County Florida Volume I

Once Upon a Lifetime in Baker County Florida Volume II

Once Upon a Lifetime in Baker County Florida Volume III

Once Upon a Lifetime in Baker County Florida Volume IV

Once Upon a Lifetime in Baker County Florida Volume V

Once Upon a Lifetime The Moonshine Legacy Volume VI

Baker's Dozen

MUSIC

Angels Will Watch O'er You

Who Am I

Tattered Box

